EXPLORING MANAGEMENT PRACTICES IN AFRICAN-AMERICAN MEGACHURCHES

A THESIS-PROJECT

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BY

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To my wife, Cookie

To my sons, Ricky, Jr., Brandon, and Dorian

To my Central Baptist Church family

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ABSTRACT

This thesis project examined the staffing patterns and trends of twenty African-American megachurches in the states of North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, Florida, Missouri, Kentucky, New York, Illinois, and Pennsylvania. A qualitative descriptive case-study methodology was used in gathering pertinent and valuable information on the twenty African-American megachurches. The use of interviews, questionnaires, and observations were critical in this process.

The twenty African-American megachurches were examined through Bolman and Deal's four organizational frames as lenses. The following frames served as the basis for examination: (1) Structural (2) Human Resources (3) Political and (4) Symbolic. Each church was examined in light of the historical or chronological development of how the philosophy of staffing was developed over time. This project was able to explore the technological, legal, and economic forces that shaped and influenced staffing in these large congregations.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

The Role of the Megachurch

A megachurch is a congregation whose weekly services include at least two

thousand congregants in attendance.[1] Regardless of how many members a church may

count on its rolls, the actual attendance at a church's main weekly worship service is the

numerical criterion that distinguishes whether a church has reached this status or not. A

church with a membership roll of over two thousand but only averages five hundred in

weekly attendance is not considered a megachurch by this definition.

According to the *Megachurches Today* 2005 survey, there are 1,210 Protestant

churches in the United States with a weekly attendance over 2,000. This is nearly double

the number of megachurches that existed in 2000 .[2] This is a sharp contrast to initial

predictions by the media that the megachurch phenomenon would decline in

connection to a handful of well-covered scandals involving some prominent pastors.

Rather, the attraction to the megachurch phenomenon is still growing in various

denominations and among Christians of all cultural and ethnic backgrounds.

Beyond a numerical categorization, megachurches share other characteristics

that distinguish them from the small and medium-sized congregations that still make up

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[1] Floyd Massey and Samuel McKinney, *Church Administration in the Black Perspective* (Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press, 1976), 23.

[2] Scott Thumma and Dave Travis, *Beyond Megachurch Myths: What We Can Learn from America's Largest Churches*, vol. 21 (Marblehead, MA: John Wiley & Sons, 2007).

the overwhelming majority of Christian churches in the United States.[3] The size of their

annual budgets is a significant factor. External observers often compare megachurches

to corporations or to mini-cities within cities. In addition to serving thousands, and in

some cases, tens of thousands of members, even average-sized megachurches (three to

five thousand in attendance) manage multi-million dollar budgets.[4]

Another distinctive is the diversity of church programming and resources.

Beyond the traditional weekly activities found in most churches (e.g., Bible studies and

mid-week prayer meetings), megachurches often provide a wide range of activities for

their members. Megachurches offer Christian alternatives to almost every aspect of life

from couples' counseling, singles ministries, finance workshops, Christian-based

business management, addiction counseling, and youth ministries to art classes, movie

nights, concerts, senior aerobics, hiking groups, and even mini shopping malls.

The Emergence of the African-American Megachurch

The 1980s and 1990s witnessed the phenomenal growth of African-American

megachurches, and by the turn of the twenty-first century these churches had evolved

into a distinct and recognizable church form. Their growth was fueled by black

suburbanization that occurred at a phenomenal pace during this same time period.

While a handful of these churches certainly existed prior to this wave of migration, they

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[3] Tamelyn Tucker-Worgs, *The Black Mega-Church: Theology, Gender, and the Politics of Public Engagement* (Waco, Texas: Baylor University Press, 2011), 28.

[4] Thumma and Travis, *Beyond Mega Church Myths*, 68.

now number at least 149, and the vast majority has become megachurches since 1980. These churches fill a niche for this new wave of migrants and provide a worship experience that is accessible, enthusiastic, and relevant to their everyday lives.[5]

Common problems in black communities have resulted in the development of common programs across black megachurches. The various programs involved food and clothing ministries, prison ministries, substance abuse ministries, social support, domestic abuse, family-oriented events and ministries and activities for children and youth, after-school and health care programs.

Because of the resources of African-American megachurches, they have been able to provide monetary support and various resources to meet many of these challenges within the black community. The churches have been able to provide jobs and economic stability in many of their communities. Abandoned homes have been rehabilitated, day care centers, conference centers, senior citizen's housing have placed many unemployed workers with gainful employment.

Some reasons for this would be the emergence of a strong economic middle class of professional African Americans, stable homeowners with a vested interest in the community, and strong and valuable means of transportation in the public and private sector.

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[5] Sandra L. Barnes, *Black Mega-Church Culture: Models for Education and Empowerment* (Washington, DC: Peter Lang, 2010), 50.

Staffing Challenges in the African-American Megachurch Movement

Black megachurches tend to be located in metropolitan areas such as

Washington, D.C., Atlanta, Houston, and Los Angeles where large numbers of black

suburbanites live and work. Like other megachurches, they have multiple ministries,

some of them traditional (i.e., usher and missionary boards) and others not so

traditional (I.e., singles and economic development ministries).[6] They utilize

sophisticated technology in their church services and on the internet to get their

message out and to connect with even more people beyond the thousands who attend

their Sunday services.

There has been a recent emergence of multi-site and multi-campus

congregations in the development of the black megachurch. These multi-site

congregations are usually staffed by campus pastors, and a senior pastor preaches a

central message to the various locations by streaming video. This development strategy

allows church expansion at minimum cost using innovative venues. Many of these

extension sites are located in local hotels, high schools, and community centers.

These megachurches are physical marvels with their enormous campuses and

sanctuaries that seat several thousand worshipers. Some of them boast of recording

studios, fitness centers, and helicopters to transport their ministers from one side of

town to the other. These churches usually have several overflow rooms to

accommodate those who do not get a seat in the main sanctuary and utilize closed-

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[6] Barnes, *Black Mega-Church Culture*, 50.

circuit televisions and video screens that broadcast the activities in their main

sanctuaries. Despite arguments that Americans have decreased their civic affiliations,

black megachurch growth patterns indicate signs of further expansion, not decline.[7]

The growing economic base of the church has changed the nature of ministry in

the megachurch as African-Americans have made economic gains.[8] The number of

specialized ministries offered in large African American churches has increased,

requiring a significant number of support staff. An increasing number of churches utilize

both paid and volunteer staff to offer counseling, social services (or at least referral

services to social work agencies), senior programs, Christian education, and children and

youth ministries. Today, more church members are demanding a certain level of training

from their pastors and from those who teach, administer church budgets, and lead

youth, children and health programs.

Since African-American megachurches are being challenged to develop adequate

staffing to meet the increasing demand to support the needs of their congregants,

various combinations of full-time, part-time, and volunteer workers are used to meet

these staffing needs. As a result, the salaries, health benefits, and retirement programs

paid to the church staff increasingly stretch the budgets of megachurches in an already

challenging economy.

These churches are increasing the number of full-time professional staff. Many

of these paid staff members are specially trained for their respective areas of ministry.

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[7] Tucker-Worgs, *Black Mega-Church*, 6.

[8] Tucker-Worgs, *Black Mega-Church*, 7.

Some megachurches employ operation directors, facility managers, staff attorneys, marketing specialist, accountants and counselors. This developing trend toward hiring specialized professionals is replacing the more traditional models of church organization and administration that tended to ignore the need for specialized professionals while they maintain a focus on paying pastors, musicians, and clerical staff. As this trend toward specialized staffing and multi-staff ministry becomes more popular, church leaders will be obligated to properly compensate those ministers who have specialized training or to collaborate with other churches and social service agencies to provide the congregational support and programming some church budgets cannot afford to staff.

Paid Versus Volunteer Staff

Large churches typically have a ministry vision that is greater than what the paid current staff is able to carry out. Thus, it becomes a priority to identify and employ the skills and talents of volunteers. The important roles volunteers play in the ministry of a church should never be dismissed or diminished. Most churches survive because they have a great host of volunteers to teach classes, care for babies, receive offerings, count money, pay bills, lead worship, staff the church kitchen, and even visit the sick and shut-ins. Willing and competent volunteers are the backbone of any church.

However, growing a progressive, more professional, and farther-reaching ministry requires at some point the addition of professional staff. No matter how faithful volunteers might be, they are generally people who have full-time responsibilities and jobs while serving the church on the side. Professional staff are able

to contribute more consistently, not only because of their training, but because, as with anyone, their vocation is high on their list of priorities. Paid staff can also be held accountable to higher standards than volunteers.[9]

As a result, a growing tension can develop between volunteers and paid staff positions in the overall staffing process. The allocation of space in the work environment can be a source of growing tension between volunteers and paid staff positions. The struggle for resources in terms of budget, personnel, and the alliances between departments or between paid staff and volunteers contribute to this growing tension between volunteers and paid staff.

But, when is it time to replace volunteers with employees? Most church leaders do not want to pay for something they can get for free. So, when is the time right for a church board to bite the bullet and make the decision to pay someone to do what a volunteer has done until now?

Due to the complexity and extent of their workload in the large church, it is often necessary to employ paid staff personnel when volunteers are approaching burnout. For instance, as growing churches become more complex organizations, tracking the finances becomes a heavy responsibility for a volunteer treasurer. When the volunteer treasurer is spending twenty hours a week doing the church's books, it is not fair to him

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[9] Floyd H. Flake, Elaine M. Flake and Edwin C. Reed, *African American Church Management Handbook* (Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press, 2005), 16.

or her, nor is it fair to the volunteer's family. The church leadership should look for a

part-time paid bookkeeper.[10]

The tension and difficulties in staffing can be the result of hiring someone

permanently when existing volunteers do not have the expertise the job requires. If a

Sunday school department has fifty students, most churches can find a volunteer leader

to handle that responsibility. However, if that same Sunday school department grows

to five hundred, it has a new and different set of challenges. It will need a competent

Christian education director who has more training, expertise, and time to give to the

job than the average layperson might have.

Although variations exist, most megachurches have similar identifiable patterns

and share a common set of organizational and leadership dynamics.[11] Most importantly,

the megachurch phenomenon fulfills both the spiritual lives of its members and satisfies

the desire for churches to demonstrate the ability to relate to modern society. The

emergence and rise of the African-American megachurch implies that this new paradigm

of congregational life has a particular attraction for African-American communities that

parallel modern times. However, as aforementioned the eminent threat to the survival

of African-American megachurches is deeply dependent on their success in organization

and management as lead by the pastor and church leadership. In a study examining

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[10] Stan Toler, *Practical Guide to Hiring Staff* (Indianapolis, IN: Wesleyan Publishing House, 2009), 53.

[11] Thumma and Travis, *Beyond Megachurches Myths*, 55.

growth potential in congregations, Carl F. George and Robert E. Logan[12] reported that

when a pastor primarily does the ministry in the congregation, rather than leading

others to do the ministry, growth potential remains small. That type of ministry

management will not allow the congregation to grow beyond a hundred or so. By

increasingly focusing on leading others into ministry, a pastor increases church-growth

potential, because the entire congregation becomes capable of working in ministry. As

the pastor leads others to do ministry, those people share in the leadership, creating a

snowball effect.[13]

The organizational needs of the African-American megachurch are complex and

little research exists that addresses these concerns especially in the arena of staffing.

Therefore, it is important to combine full-time, part-time and other volunteers to help

meet the staffing needs of these megachurches.   Due to the large number of people in

attendance, it is easily assumed that there is an endless stream of resources to meet all

the staffing needs. Financial and employment realities necessitate the need for wise

and informed managerial practices. Money is not limitless. Many of these churches have

large payrolls, mortgages, and benefit packages to meet. It has become increasingly

challenging for megachurches to provide competitive benefit packages because many

staff members are being recruited by private companies that offer very good salaries

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[12] Carl George and Robert Logan, *Leading and Managing Your Church* (Grand Rapids, MI: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1987).

[13] John Borex, Danny Lovett and Elmer Towns, *The Good Book on Leadership* (Nashville, TN: B & H, 2005), 81.

and more flexible working schedules. As a result, there is often a lack of sufficient

qualified personnel available for the large church to hire.

Therefore, this study explored staffing philosophies and practices of

megachurches in terms of the relationship of paid and volunteer staff. The guiding

research questions are:

> How does a biblical/theological understanding of staffing provide insight into African-American megachurch's staffing philosophy and practices?

> What conceptual ideas from organizational literature provide insight into an African American megachurch's staffing philosophy and practices?

> What can be learned from the actual practices of current megachurches in terms of staffing philosophies and practices?

> What can be learned from this research to improve current staffing practices in the African American megachurch?

Research Methodology

Therefore, this study explored staffing philosophies and practices of

megachurches in terms of the relationship of paid and volunteer staff. This thesis will

provide a descriptive qualitative comparative case study utilizing the data from twenty

African American megachurches as it related to volunteer and paid staff positions. The

research employed various data collection methods including interviews, on-site

observations, questionnaires, and document analysis.

The megachurches involved in this case study sample have memberships ranging

from 2,100 members to over 13,000 members. One church has over 180 full-time and

part-time paid staff members. Another church has less than twenty paid staff members,

but over 4000 active volunteers. Paid staff and volunteer staff from both megachurches

completed prepared questionnaires.

Research Models

Lea Bolman and Terrence Deal's text, *Reframing Organizations*,[14] provided a

multi-frame model for the design of this thesis-project. By using four lenses, or frames,

this analytical model is not limited to the view of organizational structures in the public

or private sector but can be used to explore organizational realities in religious groups

and churches. The following research lenses were utilized during the course of this

study:

- Structural – Explores the key role that social architecture plays in the
  functioning of organizations.

- Human Resource – Explores the dynamics of people and organizations
  and what happens when they intersect.

- Political – Individuals and groups compete to achieve their interest in a
  world of different and conflicting viewpoints, scarce resources and
  struggle for power.

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[14] Lee G. Bolman and Terrence E. Deal, *Reframing Organizations* (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1991).

- Symbolic – Organizational Symbols and Culture, spells out basic symbolic elements in organizations: myths, heroes, metaphors, stories, rituals and testimonies.[15]

Other Research Considerations

Literature Review

Scott Thumma and Dave Travis are given credit for being pioneers in the major research work on the general megachurch phenomenon in 2005. This research was done primarily on white megachurch congregations. The evaluation of the black megachurch is a distinct 1980s phenomenon.

There has been much said and written about the black megachurch but surprisingly little that has been informed by intensive empirical research on the phenomenon. Some important and significant insights have been presented based upon case studies or small studies of a handful of churches. Through their various ministries and programs these churches are engaged in community revitalization and development organization.

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[15] Bolman and Deal, *Reframing Organizations*, 10.

Theological

The twenty megachurches in our study exercised similar theological principles in their staffing process. The megachurches in this study (1) demonstrated tremendous trust in their leadership, (2) demonstrated tremendous faith in the vision of their leadership, and (3) demonstrated tremendous dependence in being guided and led by the Holy Spirit, and by the power of prayer.

Megachurches are often reflections of the leadership abilities of a senior pastor or senior leader. Almost always, the megachurch pastor is the most prominent and high-profile position in the congregation. The pastor is the center of the staff and the energy hub around which the congregation revolves. Many times it is the senior pastor who makes the final decision who will fill key staff positions. The congregation has the trust, respect, and confidence in senior leadership to make these staffing decisions.

Megachurch pastors tend to lead their churches and their teams through a clear vision and purpose. The congregations in our study have a tremendous amount of faith in their leadership to articulate and promote a clear vision that includes the staffing philosophy to support the broader church vision.

The dependence of being led by the Holy Spirit and the power of prayer are paramount to the philosophy and staffing practices of the two megachurches in this study. It does not matter what method is used; resume, interview, references, testing, the staffing practices must rely on the Holy Spirit for wisdom and guidance.

The Holy Spirit is committed to being our guide (John 16:13). The pathways of ministry are dotted with the walking wounded who have ignored the still, small voice of

the Spirit and listened to the crowd. What took early church leaders forty days of prayer and fasting to decide, modern leaders often settle in forty seconds.[16]

<p style="text-align:center">Biblical</p>

In order to develop a normative perspective on staffing trends, biblical resources were explored. The biblical research examined the theology of staffing trends in African American megachurches in the following areas:

1) Vision – It is crucial for paid staff and volunteers to understand and support the overall vision of the church. Some of the churches in this thesis require staff members to memorize the church's vision statement. Where there is no vision, the people perish (Proverbs 29:18).

2) Talents – Due to the complex structure of many megachurches, it is imperative that a broad and comprehensive search is completed to get the best qualified person to fill the position.

3) Holy Spirit – Staffing trends in many African American megachurches utilize resumes, interviews, references, and listings but they also rely on the Holy Spirit for wisdom and guidance.

4) Gifts – A strong team oriented church staff holds each member accountable to other team members for the utilization of his or her spiritual gifts. Note:

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[16] Toler, *Practical Guide to Hiring Staff*, 94.

God has given people spiritual gifts to enable them to do the work of the

ministry and to multiply the ministry of a few.

5) Stewardship – Church leaders are stewards and the biblical requirement

according to I Corinthians 4:2 is that they be found faithful. The leadership

team must be good stewards in hiring new staff, funding the staffing plan for

growth and expansion.

Significance of Research

This study is important because it can serve as a guide for staffing

megachurches. It can provide a vital tool for pastors who struggle with the

implementation and integration of multiple and specialized staff members that include

part-time and full-time paid staff alongside volunteer staff in church ministry positions.

In addition, this project may be valuable to large churches that are on the verge

of becoming megachurches. The data received through the surveys and questionnaires

will be valuable for developing a clear understanding on the role of paid staff as

compared to volunteer staff in African American megachurches. Due to the variety of

programs offered through African American megachurches, there is an increasing need

for more staff to meet the needs of a growing and vibrant congregation. These

megachurches are able to make a tremendous impact on the community by employing

those within the community for gainful employment. It is becoming difficult to balance

the tension between the staffing philosophies and practices of megachurches in light of

preferences for volunteers or paid personnel.

Chapter 2   provides a theological framework for this study. It also summarizes several Biblical themes and how they impact staffing trends.

Chapter 3   offers a literature review discussing the available work and research that has already been completed on this subject matter. The amount of literature available on staffing trends is evolving along with the understanding of the megachurch phenomenon.

Chapter 4   describes the comprehensive questionnaires that illustrate some common staffing trends utilizing paid staff, volunteers and part-timers in African American megachurches.

Chapters 5 and 6   present the reader with the research findings and conclusions based upon those findings. The research findings and conclusions provide the basis for support using charts and graphs describing various staffing trends.

CHAPTER TWO

THEOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK

This thesis-project examines how African-American megachurch staffing trends are impacted by vision, leadership, spiritual gifts, stewardship, and evangelism. As an opportunity to illuminate the most compelling issues, the specific themes discussed primarily emerged from the interviews from the participating pastors as well as from my own experience as a pastor. This chapter explores some key passages that inform a biblical-theological understanding of these five key areas.

In addition to their theological implications, these topics are discussed for the following reasons:

- During the research period, many of the African-American megachurch pastors interviewed felt strongly that understanding the church's vision was critical for paid and volunteer staffers. The ministry vision was shared up front with potential new staff members during the interview and hiring process.

- Many of these pastors were faced with the challenge to hire from within the congregation or to seek outside help in filling key leadership roles.

- A growing trend among African-American megachurch leaders is to use spiritual need assessments to help determine the spiritual gifts of prospective staff members, both paid and volunteer. These leaders are not just focused on impressive resumes or impressive academic records.

- Stewardship is necessary for the support and financing of the implementation of staffing positions, and for the proper utilization of volunteers in the budgetary process.

- Due to the tremendous resources of staff and volunteers, many African-American megachurches have become quite creative in their evangelistic efforts. The use of social media requires additional staff members to reach those who depend on the internet and technology for their information.

The following sections explore the five themes - vision, leadership, spiritual gifts, stewardship, and evangelism - from a biblical/theological point of view. Key biblical passages will be discussed in terms of exegesis and application to the African-American megachurch.

Vision

A clear understanding of the vision of the African-American megachurch is essential for paid and volunteer staff members if they expect to faithfully serve the mission of the church.[1] In *When The Multitude Comes,* Sam Davis clarified the significance of vision.[2] Davis defined vision as directional knowledge from God that informs a purpose.[3] Vision helps move the body of Christ toward the fulfillment of the

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[1] Sam Davis, *When the Multitude Comes* (North Augusta, ME: Joyful Sound Ministries, 2001), 47.

[2] Davis, *When the Multitude Comes*, 47.

[3] Davis, *When the Multitude Comes*, 47.

mission. It stimulates creativity, and it is the anchor that provides stability.[4] Vision

provides the focus under divine influence. It is the catalyst that transforms divinely

given thoughts into physical realities. It spurs persons on to action to achieve even

greater things. Vision is the substance in which dreams are made, upon which missions

are founded, and goals are accomplished. It is the glue that keeps the visionary

connected with the vision-giver. It is vital for a church to have vision because without a

vision, the people perish.[5]

Two biblical passages well known for their importance in any discussion of vision

are Proverbs 29:18 and Habakkuk 2:2-3.

Proverbs 29:18

"Where there is no vision, the people perish: but he that keepeth the law, happy is he."

Exegesis

Hazon, translated as "vision," almost always signifies a means of divine

revelation.[6] First, it refers to the means itself, to a prophetic vision through which divine

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[4] Davis, *When the Multitude Comes*, 47.

[5] Davis, *When the Multitude Comes,* 47.

[6] Bruce K. Waltke, *The Book of Proverbs: Chapters 15-31* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2005), 445-446.

messages are communicated.[7] "The days are prolonged, and every vision faileth."[8]

Second, this word represents the message received by prophetic vision: "Where there is

no vision, the people perish: but he that keepeth the law, happy is he."[9]

Rowland Murphy notes, "In prophetic literature especially, *Hazon* designates the

vision of the prophet, but it occurs only here in Proverbs."[10] As a result, discussion has

revolved around the theological significance of this term in this text. Whether one

understands *hazon* in terms of the prophetic visions experienced by the prophets, or as

the prophetic exhortations of the prophets, the paramount point is the prophetic vision

is granted only by God to communicate to his people. This is heightened by the focus of

the second half of the verse that emphasizes the importance of keeping God's law.

Proper vision comes from the revelatory vision that is from God. When God

speaks a vision or instruction, it is imperative to completely follow the vision for positive

change. If God provides no instruction, or if people do not listen for God's instruction,

people rely on their own intellect and ways. Albert Ross has declared, "A nation's well-

being depends on obedience to divine revelation."[11]

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[7] Duane A. Garrett, *Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Solomon*, NAC (Nashville, TN: Broadman, 2001), 231.

[8] Ezekiel 12:22.

[9] Proverbs 29:18. Derek Kidner, *Proverbs*, TOTC, Reprint (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2008), 168.

[10] Rowland E Murphy, *Proverbs*, WBC (Dallas, TX: Word, 1998), 222.

[11] Allen P. Ross, "Proverbs," *EBC*, vol 5, edited by Frank E. Gaebelein (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1991), 1116.

When there is no special divine revelation to supplement knowledge and to

correct the ignorance of the unenlightened, there is a perishing, or nakedness, in the

land. The fatal effects of the absence of a revelation of God's will are confusion,

disorder, and rebellion. People, uncontrolled, fall into grievous excesses, which nothing

but high principles can restrain.[12]

Throughout Scripture, visions from God constituted the primary vehicle for

communicating God's will and purposes for his people and the nations at large.[13] The

contexts are both positive and negative. The revelation of God through visions and

dreams culminated in the coming of Christ, who is the ultimate embodiment of God's

redemptive plan. Once Christ had finished his work, the Holy Spirit is now given to all

believers as their means of prophetic vision through discerning God's will and direction

for their lives through the words of Scripture.[14]

Application

Prophetic vision is an imperative for church leadership. In *Jesus-Driven Ministry*,

Ajith Fernando emphasizes the importance of understanding and acting upon God's will.

He first states, "Our task is to depend on the words that come from his [God's]

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[12] H.D.M. Spence and Joseph S. Exell. eds, *Proverbs* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson), 556.

[13] William T. Arnold, "Visions," in Walter A. Elwell, ed., *Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1996).

[14] Stephen D. Renn, ed., *Expository Dictionary of Bible Words, Word Studies for Key English Bible Words Based on the Hebrew and Greeks Texts* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2005).

mouth."[15] Then, he continues, "In other words, our passion should not be focused on how to provide for our needs. It should be to know and do God's will. If we concentrate on that, God will provide what is necessary for us."[16] As African-American churches look to staff their paid and volunteer positions, they must emphasize the importance of depending upon God's direction as he reveals it. God will provide what ministry leaders need to accomplish the mission. On the other hand, if they forego or ignore God's instruction, the probability of being misguided increases to unfavorable conditions. The risks to ministries and those staffing them may exponentially increase.

<center>Habakkuk 2:2-3</center>

"And the Lord answered me, and said, Write the vision, and make it plain upon tables, that he may run that readeth it. For the vision is yet for an appointed time, but at the end it shall speak, and not lie: though it tarry, wait for it; because it will surely come, it will not tarry."

Exegesis

While Proverbs 29:18 emphasizes the importance of receiving and acting upon divine vision, this text in Habakkuk emphasizes the importance of recording and communicating divine vision.

In Habakkuk 1, the reader enters a dialogue between the prophet and God. Habakkuk is looking to God to judge the wicked in Israel, but God is not moving fast

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[15] Ajith Fernando, *Jesus Driven Ministry* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2002), 77.

[16] Fernando, *Jesus Driven Ministry*, 77.

enough for Habakkuk.[17] God responds with a revelation of his plans to use the

Babylonians to judge Israel.[18]   Now, as the second chapter opens with Habakkuk waiting

for God's rebuke of his challenge to God's plan, God commands Habakkuk to write down

the details of a vision for future generations.[19]

> O. Palmer Robertson writes,
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> The response of the Lord comes in the form of a *vision*. This fact immediately takes this word out of the realm of a personal response directed only to the prophet himself. Although it is conceivable that the Lord might have granted to his prophet a message directed to him personally through a vision, the repeated pattern of OT prophetic revelation suggests that God communicates vision to his prophet in his role as mediator of a divine message.[20]

The vision was not for Habakkuk; it was for God's people. Robertson continues, saying,

"The specific instructions to *Inscribe the vision and make it plain on the tablets*

underscore its significance not only for the crucial hour in which Habakkuk lived, but

also for generations to come."[21]

God provides visions in one form or another to his ministers to communicate to

his people. It could be said that all of Scripture is a recorded vision of God's redemptive

plan to which we repeatedly refer for divine direction. If Scripture was not available in

written form, it would have to rely strictly upon oral transmission. Rather, God stressed

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[17] Habakkuk 1:1-4.

[18] Habakkuk 1:5-12.

[19] Habakkuk 1:13-2:3.

[20] O. Palmer Robertson, *The Books of Nahum, Habakkuk, and Zephaniah*, NICOT (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2005), 168.

[21] Robertson, *Habakkuk*, 168.

the necessity to record his message so that it established and available to all. Even today, we can turn to the writings of Habakkuk.

Application

Vision does not end when God provides it. He intends for vision to be communicated to his people. While vision can, and should, be communicated orally on a consistent basis, it is also beneficial for the vision to be in written form that it may become an established guide for the African-American megachurch, with far-reaching impact on the leadership and the congregation.

Leith Anderson writes, "Vision gives hope. Vision gives the impression that someone is in control."[22] Later, he narrows down on the concept of vision, saying, "Vision answers the 'what if?' question."[23] A written vision for an African-American megachurch tells its members the answer to "What if?" It provides goals for paid and volunteer staff to use to evaluate the faithfulness of their ministries. When they have the written vision, they have it front of them, constantly reminding them of why they do what they do. It guides them as they serve in the work of the kingdom.

Conclusion

The pastor's vision with clarity is crucial and vital for the philosophy and staffing practices of African-American megachurches. Both paid and volunteer staff members

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[22] Leith Anderson, *Leadership that Works* (Minneapolis, MN: Bethany House, 1999), 191.

[23] Anderson, *Leadership that Works*, 195.

are affected by policies enacted by the church. It is imperative that leadership possess wisdom to create policies that reflect fairness for all staff members.

Sharing the vision is most effective when it comes from the key decision makers and core leaders outward to the congregation and community. Before the vision can be shared with the congregation, it should be shared with this core group. These may be trustees, elders, deacons, secretaries, teachers, opinion leaders, or those people without formal positions who are known for their faith and commitment to the life of the church. The core group can assist the pastor by encouraging, supporting, and assisting in framing the vision.

Leadership

The leadership teams of the profiled African-American megachurches consist of senior pastor, or co-pastors, surrounded by a network of paid and volunteer clergy, and lay leaders responsible for day-to-day logistics. The size of these church staffs correspond with church size, and the number and type of programs offered. Although major decisions are not made without the senior pastor's approval, cults of personality do not appear to be the norm. To the contrary, pastors seem to strive to train competent leaders and to empower them to make sound decisions.

Pastoral responsibilities generally preclude micro-managing. Yet, clergy and lay leaders who have been properly socialized become suitable pastoral proxies in their respective leadership roles and decision-making abilities. Responsibilities are multifaceted because leaders tend to have both spiritual and administrative roles.

Existing staff, along with new staff members, need to have a proper understanding of

what biblical leadership looks like. Exodus 18:13-19 and Mark 10:43-45 provide biblical

insights for this understanding of leadership.

Exodus 18:13-19

And it came to pass on the morrow, that Moses sat to judge the people: and the people
stood by Moses from the morning unto the evening. And when Moses' father in law saw
all that he did to the people, he said, What is this thing that thou doest to the people?
why sittest thou thyself alone, and all the people stand by thee from morning unto
even? And Moses said unto his father in law, Because the people come unto me to
enquire of God: When they have a matter, they come unto me; and I judge between one
and another, and I do make them know the statutes of God, and his laws. And Moses'
father in law said unto him, The thing that thou doest is not good. Thou wilt surely wear
away, both thou, and this people that is with thee: for this thing is too heavy for thee;
thou art not able to perform it thyself alone. Hearken now unto my voice, I will give thee
counsel, and God shall be with thee: Be thou for the people to God-ward, that thou
mayest bring the causes unto God.

Exegesis

This text immediately follows the account of Moses' reunion with his wife and

children.[24] While the reunion was exciting, and Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, was

pleased to hear about all that God had done, it was the events of the next day that

contributed to a major shift in the way in which Israel was to be governed. John

Durham notes, "The day immediately following the day of the reunion was a day,

perhaps the regular day repeated periodically or as necessary, when Moses took his

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[24] Exodus 18:1-12.

position to receive and to help all who were having difficulty of any kind in the application of the terms of God's covenant to the exigencies of day-to-day living."[25]

In *Exodus,* Durham identified the concept or organizational structure as long-standing issue.[26] Moses, by himself, dispensed decisions for all of the issues the people of Israel brought him. His heart was in the right place, but the practice was impractical. God had provided the covenant law, and it was authoritative for Israel, but they needed it explained and applied for them. Jethro questioned the wisdom of Moses organizational structure in which Moses settled every dispute that arose in Israel because it was going to wear out both Moses and the people.[27]

Moses needed to understand that the work was too heavy for one person to handle.[28] Terrence Frethiem writes, "It should not be surprising that Moses is presented as a somewhat inept administrator. His experience of redemption did not immediately endow him or others in Israel with efficient and creative administrative skills."[29]Jethro told Moses to select capable and Godly men to serve as officials to assist him. Moses himself should handle major and difficult cases; the judges should handle the simple cases of dispute. If God allowed Moses to structure the courts of Israel like this, then it

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[25] John I Durham, *Exodus*, WBC (Dallas, TX: Word, 1998), 249.

[26] Durham, *Exodus*, 249.

[27] Durham, *Exodus,* 249.

[28] Durham, *Exodus*, 249.

[29] Terrence E. Fretheim, *Exodus* (Louisville, KY: JKP, 1991), 198.

would mean a lighter load, less pressure, and national peace.[30] As a result, Israel's

judicial system began with the beginning of the covenant.

Application

This text serves well to demonstrate the need for church leadership to utilize a

shared responsibility concept. This is certainly true for the African-American

megachurch. The size of the church and ministerial demands of the pastor are too great

for any one person to bear by himself. Many leaders limit their leadership potential or

quickly burn out in leadership because of their failure to delegate. It is impossible for

leaders to do everything themselves without burning out. It is important for leaders to

delegate so that they can focus and be effective on things that they do well.

Today, we can look at the advice Moses received from Jethro, and attribute it to

common sense. Yet, in practice, the church needs to be more diligent in finding capable

persons who are able to lead. This text does not give license to fill positions just

because a need exists; rather, where a need exists, the positions ought to be filled by

those capable of doing so. When leadership in the megachurch puts this into practice

the efficiency and effectiveness of the ministry will grow.

Mark 10:43-45

But so shall it not be among you: but whosoever will be great among you, shall be your
minister: And whosoever of you will be the chiefest, shall be servant of all. For even the

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[30] *Preacher's Outline and Sermon Bible Commentary on Exodus* (Chattanooga, TN: Leadership Ministries, 1973), 3.

Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.

Exegesis

This text occurs within the larger periscope that begins in verse 35. The brothers, James and John, ask Jesus for the most prestigious places of honor when Jesus establishes his kingdom; they want to sit at his right and left hands.[31] With a gentle rebuke, Jesus informs them that while they may suffer as he suffers, he cannot give them those places.[32]

When the other ten disciples heard about the request that Zebedee's made, "they became indignant with James and John."[33] The text does not indicate the reason for their indignance, but as Robert H. Stein points out, "It was probably due to their own desire for such special places of honor in the kingdom."[34] In all fairness to the disciples, it was not unreasonable for them to have some sort of expectation regarding their seats of authority in the coming kingdom. Jesus had told the disciples they would, "sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel."[35] What they had not accounted for "was the struggle and suffering that lay ahead."[36]

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[31] Mark 10:37.

[32] Mark 10:38-40.

[33] Mark 10:41.

[34] Robert H. Stein, *Mark*, BECNT (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2008), 486.

[35] Matthew 19:28.

[36] Craig A. Evans, *Mark 8:27-16:20*, WBC (Waco, TX: Word, 2001), 117.

So, Jesus uses this opportunity to teach the disciples about discipleship and leadership. He states the obvious that the disciples know how authority and power are used by the Gentiles, and that power and authority are desired in order to be considered great. Craig Evans writes, "Greatness in Jesus' day was defined as power, coercive power. The more power one had, the 'greater' one was. The disciples [knew] these things through story and personal observation. Jesus' lesson would have an especially significant impact upon the disciples, given the state of Israel's subjugation at that time."[37]

Jesus flips this paradigm on its head. Rather than pursuing greatness through the exercise of power over others, those who served for the good of others would be the great ones. "In stark contrast to this world's value system, Jesus teaches that greatness in God's kingdom involves not being master or lord over others but being a servant or slave."[38] Many want power to lord over others, but those of the Kingdom of God seek to be servants to all. Ezra Gould summarizes it well, saying, "Here is the paradox of the Kingdom of God. Instead of being lords, its great ones become servants, and its chiefs the bond-servants of all."[39]

The request to sit on his right hand and on his left in the kingdom would not only be an honor, but it would give authority. Jesus informs them that while the princes and

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[37] Evans, *Mark*, 118.

[38] Stein, *Mark*, 489.

[39] Ezra P. Gould, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel According to St. Mark*, ICC (Edinburgh, UK: T. & T. Clark, 1896), 202.

the great among the Gentiles exercise dominion and authority, it is not to be so in his kingdom, but that the post of honor is to be the post of servitude. The one who would be great must be their minister (domestic servant), and he who would be chief (first), must be their slave. He enforces the lesson by his own example, in that he came not to have men serve him, but that he might serve them. In this way both the ambition of James and John, and the indignation of the others, were suppressed.[40]

The foundation for this paradigm shift is found in none other than Jesus' own servanthood. Jesus drives the point servanthood point home by stating that he himself lives, and dies, as a servant to all. If Jesus, the Lord of all creation, is a servant to all, then how much more so should those who claim to belong to him live as servants to all. Jesus was the perfect example of a servant leader because he came not to be served but to serve others, and to give his life as a ransom for many. Jesus' mission was to serve ultimately by giving his life in order to save sinful humanity. His life was not taken; he gave it, offered it up as a sacrifice for people's sins. A ransom was the price paid to release a slave from bondage. Jesus paid a ransom for us, and the demanded price was his life. Jesus took our place; he died the death we deserved.[41]

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[40] J.W. McGarvey, *A Commentary on Matthew and Mark* (Delight, AR: Gospel Light Publishing, 1875), 176.

[41] Paul Kissling, *Genesis* (Mechanicsburg, PA: College Press, 2004.

Application

Stein, in his summary of the text, writes,

Unfortunately, over the centuries the model for Christian leadership has been lost sight of and ignored, and the desire for honor, prestige, and power has dominated. In the present day, when the pattern often suggested for Christian leaders is that of a CEO ruling over a corporation, the model of Jesus as a servant leader cannot be emphasized enough. Those who aspire to greatness in the kingdom of God should have this example of Jesus for their model.[42]

African-American megachurch leaders should always be willing to be the

greatest servants among the people under their care. They are not in positions of

leadership to rule over their congregations with an iron fist. They are not in leadership

positions to take advantage of the flock in their care. They are in leadership positions to

serve the people who belong to God. Servanthood is the best model of leadership for

the pastor who wants to see the people of God grow in his kingdom.

<center>Conclusion</center>

According to the world, greatness is having many servants to rule, but greatness

in God's sight is serving. The world esteems position and the pride that comes with it.

God esteems humility.[43] African-American megachurches employ full-time, part-time

and volunteer staff members in order to share the tremendous demands and needs of

growing congregations with various ministry components. These paid and volunteer

staff members must learn to work with each other as they serve together. As Aubrey

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[42] Stein, *Mark*, 489.

[43] John G. Butler, *Analytical Bible Expositor* (Georgetown, TX: Wordsearch, 2008), 4.

Malphurs describes Christian leadership, "Christian leaders are servants with credibility and capabilities, who are able to influence people in a particular context to pursue their God-given direction."[44]

Spiritual Gifts

Spiritual gifting is an important consideration in the staffing of the African-American megachurch.[45] Many of these churches use spiritual gifts surveys to assess paid and volunteer staff.[46] These churches are not only concerned about outstanding academic qualifications; they also want to know if there is a correlation between their spiritual gifts and professional qualifications.[47]

Ephesians 4:10-16

Ephesians 4:10-12 states that Christ gave gifts to the church. Those five gifts embodied in persons are often referred to as the ascension gifts because Christ gave them to the church as he ascended on high. Therefore, it is logical to conclude that Christ expected it would take a team of people to build the church.

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[44] Aubrey Malphurs, *Being Leaders: The Nature of Authentic Christian Leadership* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2003), 33.

[45] Charles V. Bryant, *Rediscovering Our Spiritual Gifts: Building Up the Body of Christ Through the Gifts of the Spirit* (Nashville, TN: Upper Room Books, 1991).

[46] Scott Thumma and Dave Travis, *Beyond Megachurch Myths: What We Can Learn from America's Largest Churches*, vol. 21 (Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, 2007).

[47] Thumma and Travis, *Beyond Megachurch Myths*.

Paul most clearly presented the equipping ministry model in Ephesians 4:11-16. There he set forth the relationship between those persons given to be apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers, to the people of God, the church. He identified the relationship in functional terms, neither in terms of static position nor of governing authority. He plainly declared the function of the recipients of the gifts to be God's gift to the church for the immediate equipping of God's people for the work of service.[48]

One might contend that all the necessary gifts to build a church are present in the people. God has gifted each person and, to the extent each person is empowered to use his gifts, the church will grow. Unfortunately, the lifestyle of most people today reduces their available time for volunteer ministry. The emergence of the two-income family, the growing number of women pursuing careers, and a commuter constituency, among other lifestyle changes, have diminished the number of hours the typical church member can devote to volunteer service.

The following two biblical passages are important to the discussion of spiritual gifts and the staffing and philosophy of African-American megachurches.

Romans 12:3-8

For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith. For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office: So we,

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[48] James Orr, ed., *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia* (Grand Rapids, MI; Eerdmans, 1939).

being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another. Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, whether prophecy, let us prophesy according to the proportion of faith; Or ministry, let us wait on our ministering: or he that teacheth, on teaching; Or he that exhorteth, on exhortation: he that giveth, let him do it with simplicity; he that ruleth, with diligence; he that sheweth mercy, with cheerfulness.

Exegesis

In this text, Paul's purpose is to encourage the unity of the community by exhorting the Romans believers to exercise their gifts for the good of all. In three instances (service, teaching, and consoling), his statement is rather banal and repetitive. In three others (giving, leading, and mercy), he explains how these gifts should be exercised. In the case of prophecy, he adds, "Let us use it in agreement with faith."[49]

Paul begins chapter 12 with a universal appeal to the Roman believers to sanctify themselves to God.[50] In verses 3-8, while he is still addressing all of the believers, the way in which he is addressing them has changed. John Murray writes, "The change is that the apostle has now in view the differences that exist among the believers, differences which God in his sovereign providence and distributions of his grace has caused to exist."[51]

Interestingly, the "body" language used in verse 1 of the individual is now used to discuss the church as a collective group of individuals. Now, Paul drives at the

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[49] Frank Matera, *Commentary on Romans* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2010), 290.

[50] Matera, *Romans,* 290.

[51] John Murray, *Romans*, NICNT (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1965), 116.

necessity of unity in the midst of diversity. This is important for the believers to understand because "Believers are not only members of the one body but also of one another."[52]

As Paul continues to develop his argument for unity in diversity, he appeals to the fact that God has provided various spiritual gifts to individual members of the body.[53] So, in order to be a complete body, they must rely upon one another as they exercise their gifts. Now, it is also important to understand that this list of gifts is not exhaustive. Murray rightly states, "In these verses seven distinct gifts are mentioned. In 1 Corinthians 12:8-10 nine are specified, in 1 Corinthians 12:28, 29 also nine, in Ephesians 4:11 either four or five according as we regard 'pastors or teachers' as one office or two."[54]

Application

No one person is better than any other person in the kingdom of God. There may be a diversity of gifts, but not favoritism, in the spiritual essence of the called ones. A diversity of gifts is prevalent in the body of Christ, but they are not to be used in an individualistic fashion. The purpose of the gifts is that the body of Christ – believers – might benefit from such gifts. The goal is that the body serves the body through the diversity of gifts.

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[52] Murray, *Romans*, 120.

[53] Murray, *Romans*, 120.

[54] Murray, *Romans*, 121.

I Corinthians 12:1-7

> Now concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I would not have you ignorant. Ye know that ye were Gentiles, carried away unto these dumb idols, even as ye were led. Wherefore I give you to understand, that no man speaking by the Spirit of God calleth Jesus accursed: and that no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost. Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. And there are differences of administrations, but the same Lord. And there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all.

Exegesis

"Now concerning" cues the reader that Paul is taking up a new subject, and it appears from the language that this is an issue raised by the Corinthians in their letter to him.[55] Verses 1-3 set the context for the bulk of Paul's discussion on spiritual gifts. In these verses, Paul language implies that the Roman believers had experienced charismatic gifts as pagans. Now, Paul makes a distinction by appealing to the verbal content uttered by those who profess to be Christians who exercise charismatic gifts. That content is directly related to the cursing of Christ or the lordship of Christ.

With this context set, Paul discusses the distribution of gifts in the church. His emphasis is not as much on the gifts as it is on who distributes the gifts for the common good of the church. C.K Barrett writes, "Gifts are shared out among Christians; all do not receive the same gift, but all the gifts come from the Spirit, so that there is no room for rivalry, discontent, or a feeling of superiority."[56]

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[55] David E. Garland, *1 Corinthians*, BENTC (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2003), 561.

[56] C.K. Barrett, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, BNTC (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1968), 283-284.

Note that Paul writes that different members of the body receive different gifts from the Spirit for the mutual good of the body of Christ.[57] Extrapolating principles from the discussion, particularly verse 7, the Spirit is a sovereign entity in distributing the gifts and the credit for gifts belong solely to the Spirit.[58] Christians are given gifts from God and do not possess anything they are not given. Importantly, there is no one gift that permits one to be more or less spiritual than another.[59] No individual person has all gifts and no individual can be recognized as an ideal Christian because of his or her gifts. The Spirit works in every Christian in the community and the Spirit alone ensures that there will be a diversity of gifts.[60]

Application

Once again, the exercise of divine gifts is called to be a community effort where everyone is expected to fulfill their call. If one person misses his assignment, everyone is placed in jeopardy of failing. The end result is that if we do fail, there is still a more excellent way that is available. Everyone must be willing to gird up their loins and get to work with the work of God. All gifts are needed for the body of Christ to make an impact. We should realize that spiritual gifts come in great variety. Even though there is only one Lord and one spirit, God works in every Christian, using a variety of spiritual

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[57] 1 Corinthians 12:7.

[58] Garland, *1 Corinthians*, 587.

[59] Garland, *1 Corinthians*, 587.

[60] Garland, *1 Corinthians*, 587.

gifts. We must not expect uniformity nor should we be misled by the diversity. Spiritual

gifts distributed with purpose and thought, according to the divine will, are for our

good. As such, we are to use them to serve one another.[61]

Within the church, God has distributed gifts of leadership, miracles, and service.

None of the gifts are universal; God distributes them as he wills. We should seek not for

the gifts of our own choosing nor for the gifts we perceive to have honor, but we should

seek to allow God to give us greater gifts, which operate within the parameters of love

and humility, rather than schism. The Spirit chooses what gift shall be given to each

Christian, so that none has occasion for boasting or a sense of inferiority.[62]

Conclusion

In the African-American megachurch, paid and volunteer staff can work together

to effectively serve growing congregations when individuals use their spiritual gifts to

edify and build up the body of Christ. While a church leader can be driven by

personality in leadership, or have been trained to be a leader, the potential to lead

according to divine enablement through the use of spiritual gifts is what truly

distinguishes church leaders from secular leadership as he faithfully utilizes that gift for

the good of the church.

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[61] Exegetical notes on I Corinthians 12, Grace Communion International, 3.

[62] Barrett, *First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 114.

Stewardship

Stewards control the affairs of a large household, directing the household servants, and controlling the household expenses on behalf of the owner.[63] This is a great deal of responsibility and power for any individual.

African-American megachurch stewardship efforts directly affect staffing trends and the relationship between paid staff and volunteers. They often wrestle with the question of when to staff and how to provide the necessary funding for a new staff position. Exercising the best stewardship of the resources that come into the church requires an efficient, effective structure; one that supports and enhances the church's ministry goals and objectives.

Often, megachurches are prone to expand staff before they have a clear picture of how they will handle the additional financial load. What will the new staff member's compensation involve? Will it include housing allowance, pension, health insurance, Social Security reimbursement (in the case of clergy), and an allowance for professional expenses, such as mileage reimbursement, book purchases, and subscriptions to professional magazines?

Megachurches are struggling with these same concerns as they look for staff to lead them in the new millennium. As an example, note the following six major issues that executive pastors discussed at a recent Church Champions meeting, sponsored by Leadership Network. Four of the six issues relate directly to staffing concerns:

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[63] George Arthur Buttrick, *The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 1962), 943.

1. Personal issues – Hiring, firing, finding the right people for large churches, salaries, and benefits policies.

2. Lay mobilization – What are the central structures in decentralization? What is the relationship of paid to unpaid staff?

3. Staff organization and team building – Building leaders that build leaders, supervision issues, team structures, and organization.

4. Resources – Making the most with the least, especially in computers, buildings, and office space.

5. Evaluation – How do we know we are still making a difference?

6. Leadership – Development and when to add staff.[64]

Churches typically have a ministry vision that is greater than the staff is able to carry out. Thus, it becomes a priority to identify and employ the skills and talents of volunteers. The important roles volunteers can play in the ministry of a church ought never be dismissed or diminished. However, growing a progressive, more professional and far-reaching ministry will require the addition of professional staff at some point. No matter how faithful volunteers might be, they are generally people who have full-time responsibilities or jobs and who serve the church on the side. Professional staff are able to contribute more consistently, not only because of their training, but because, as with anyone, their vocation is high on their list of priorities. Paid staff can also be held accountable to higher standards than volunteers.

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[64] McIntosh, 50, 51.

The following two biblical passages are important to the discussion of

stewardship, and to the staffing philosophy of African-American megachurches.

Judges 9:1-6

And Abimelech the son of Jerubbaal went to Shechem unto his mother's
brethren, and communed with them, and with all the family of the house of his
mother's father, saying, Speak, I pray you, in the ears of all the men of Shechem,
Whether is better for you, either that all the sons of Jerubbaal, which are
threescore and ten persons, reign over you, or that one reign over you?
remember also that I am your bone and your flesh. And his mother's brethren
spake of him in the ears of all the men of Shechem all these words: and their
hearts inclined to follow Abimelech; for they said, He is our brother. And they
gave him threescore and ten pieces of silver out of the house of Baalberith,
wherewith Abimelech hired vain and light persons, which followed him. And he
went unto his father's house at Ophrah, and slew his brethren the sons of
Jerubbaal, being threescore and ten persons, upon one stone: notwithstanding
yet Jotham the youngest son of Jerubbaal was left; for he hid himself. And all the
men of Shechem gathered together, and all the house of Millo, and went, and
made Abimelech king, by the plain of the pillar that was in Shechem.

Exegesis

While at first glance, this text may not appear to have anything to teach on the

subject of stewardship, this text actually describes misappropriated stewardship.

Gideon has died leaving behind seventy sons, and Abimelech, the son of his concubine.[65]

Following Gideon's death, Israel returned to its rebellion toward God as "they

prostituted themselves to the Baals."[66]

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[65] Judges 8:29-32.

[66] Judges 8:33-35.

Abimelech, seeing an opportunity to assert his own leadership, approached the

leaders of Shechem, home of his mother. The Shechemites agreed to make him "king,"

and they gave him seventy pieces of silver from their temple treasury, a temple

dedicated to the Baal worship. Tragically, Abimelech used the money to pay worthless

and reckless men to slaughter his half-brothers.

The men of Shechem were poor stewards of their resources, giving Abimelech

funds from their treasury. Abimelech was a poor steward of the funds given him, hiring

men to kill off his family. He received money from the treasury of the temple dedicated

to Baal, and with this money, Abimelech easily hired light and desperate men who

followed and attached themselves to him. Abimelech, with their help, murdered his

seventy brothers at Ophrah.[67]

Application

Again, the primary focus of this text is not stewardship. However, the outcome

of this tragedy demonstrates that leadership has the potential to squander supplies if

they do not handle funds or supplies correctly. This can place the organization in a

tough situation when stewardship is not used in appropriate manners.

In the case of this narrative, the motivations of the people involved were wicked

and self-centered. Now, while one may expect that church leadership would not

conduct themselves in this way, the reality is that every person, and every church, has

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[67] C.F. Keil and F. Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2006), 4.

the potential to misuse that which God provides. This is particularly true when it comes

to paying staff. The decisions a church makes in the staffing of that church can set it up

for great success or devastating failure.

Luke 14:28-33

> For which of you, intending to build a tower, sitteth not down first, and counteth
> the cost, whether he have sufficient to finish it? Lest haply, after he hath laid the
> foundation, and is not able to finish it, all that behold it begin to mock
> him, Saying, This man began to build, and was not able to finish. Or what king,
> going to make war against another king, sitteth not down first, and consulteth
> whether he be able with ten thousand to meet him that cometh against him with
> twenty thousand? Or else, while the other is yet a great way off, he sendeth an
> ambassage, and desireth conditions of peace. So likewise, whosoever he be of
> you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple.

Exegesis

While Absalom's narrative provides insight into the stewardship of resources one

has, this text focuses on the planning involved to be good stewards. The text follows

Jesus' presentation of two conditions for discipleship.[68] "The first condition calls for a

willingness to put parents, family, relatives, even one's own life in subordination to

discipleship," [69] and "The second condition calls for the disciples to carry their crosses

and walk behind Jesus.[70]

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[68] Luke 14:25-27.

[69] Joseph A. Fitzmeyer, *The Gospel According to Luke X-XXIV*, AB (New York, NY: Doubleday, 1985), 1062.

[70] Fitzmeyer, *Luke X-XXIV*, 1062.

These conditions provide the basis for the series of brief parables that Jesus uses

to teach his disciples about the cost of discipleship. The first picture is that of a builder

planning to build a house.[71] Darrell Bock writes, "Before building, the wise person

assesses the expense. One does not build the tower, despite its benefits, until one

knows it is affordable and that can be brought to completion. The wise decision involves

reflection, not reaction. Sitting and calculating the cost means a reasoned

assessment."[72]

The second parable compares discipleship to that of a king preparing his armies

for war.[73] It stresses "The importance of examining a situation and reflecting before

acting."[74] The wise king calculates whether he has enough to successfully engage in war,

especially when the odds are stacked against him. Using these parables, Jesus teaches

his disciples that they must, "Consider the cost of entry and the benefits of allying with

the one who carries the power."[75]

Application

While Bock correctly observes that Jesus applies these parables to discipleship,

saying, "One should assess whether one is ready to take on the personal commitment

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[71] Luke 14:28-30.

[72] Darrell L. Bock, *Luke 9:51-24:53*, BECNT (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1996), 1287.

[73] Luke 14:31-32.

[74] Bock, *Luke 9:51-24:53*, 1288.

[75] Bock, *Luke 9:51-24:53*, 1289.

and sacrifice required to follow Jesus," their application can be reasonably extend to

stewardship within the context of gospel ministry. Leaders in African-American

megachurches need to have a clear understanding of what it will take to complete any

task that is started; they must count the cost in order to be completely successful.

Conclusion

African-American megachurches must count the cost when it relates to the

expanding of staff and the financing of projects due to expansion and growth.

Increasingly, both small and large American churches are becoming more like

megachurches in the developing world.[76] This likeness is demonstrating itself in the way

American congregations are moving toward multiple uses of time, space, location, and

staff for worship services.[77] The issues actually have less to do with being a small or

large church than with the problem-solving needs churches of all sizes face. For

example, as churches grow larger, how are the common problems of limited space,

limited staff, and the decision to meet at times other than eleven o'clock on Sunday

morning addressed?

This pattern of churches expanding the variety of ministries through additional staff

is further noticed once a church average worship attendance reaches a certain number.

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[76] Thumma and Travis, *Beyond Megachurch Myths*, 2007.

[77] Thumma and Travis, *Beyond Megachurch Myths*, 2007.

It is common for megachurches with attendance of 2,000 or more people to provide associate pastors for almost every category of ministry staff.[78]

Evangelism

Many megachurches have intentionally increased their staff, both paid and volunteers, to be more aggressive in evangelism efforts. The pastor is the catalyst to the overall success of any outreach program. His input, involvement, and example are paramount. Unfortunately, many pastors are expected to either attend, or at least verbally support, every ministry activity in the church. He becomes the designated cheerleader for every ministry. A pastor's desire is to see every ministry that is Christ-honoring and kingdom-building succeed. However, there is only so much of him to go around. Unfortunately, many pastors become so spread out and divided among ministry activities that they are rendered ineffective.

The following two biblical passages are important to the discussion of evangelism and the staffing philosophy of African-American megachurches.

Matthew 28:19-20

> And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen.

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[78] Thumma and Travis, *Beyond Megachurch Myths*, 2007.

Exegesis

This text is usually called the Great Commission. The word "power" means "authority." The entire gospel of Matthew stresses the authority of Jesus Christ. The Greek word translated, "go," is actually not a command, but a present participle (going). The only command in the Great Commission is make disciples (teach all nations). Jesus is not only in their midst when his people gather together; he is also with them when they scatter into the world to witness.[79]

The central idea of this text hinges on the question, "What does Jesus do with the authority given to him?" The answer is that he commissions his church to make disciples, to reproduce themselves as followers of Christ. Jesus states that "all power" is his. Frederick Dale Bruner writes, "All spiritual, metaphysical, philosophical, and religious power '*in heaven*' but also all social, physical, political and economic power '*on earth*' are in *his* hands. He is in charge around here."[80] It is this all-encompassing power that he entrusts to his disciples. Although Jesus could have commanded anything of them, he commands them to make disciples.

R.T. France aptly summarizes the commission:

> The commission is expressed not in terms of the means, to proclaim the good news, but of the end, to 'make disciples.' It is not enough that nations hear the message; they must also respond with the same whole-hearted commitment which was required of those who became disciples of Jesus during his ministry. The sentence structure is of a main verb in the imperative, 'make disciples,'

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[79] Bible Exposition Commentary – New Testament, Vol. 1.

[80] Frederick Dale Bruner, *Matthew 13-28* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2004), 813.

followed by two uncoordinated participles, 'baptizing' and 'teaching,' which spell out the process of making disciples."[81]

This is evangelism.

Application

"Universal Lordship means universal mission."[82] The Great Commission is a non-negotiable for the believer as an individual and for the church as a corporate body. Because Jesus Christ has all authority, the African-American megachurch may obey him without fear. It does not matter where he leads us nor what circumstances we face, he is still in control. Our Lord's death on the cross was for the whole world. If we are the children of God and share his nature, then we want to tell the good news to the lost world.

<div align="center">Genesis 12:1-3</div>

> Now the LORD had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee: And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing: And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed.

Exegesis

Genesis 12:1-3 is a foundational passage that tells us about the calling of Abraham. The Lord called him to leave his country, his people, and his father's

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[81] R.T. France, *The Gospel of Matthew*, NICNT (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2007), 1115.

[82] David L. Turner, *Matthew*, BECNT (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2008), 689.

household to go to a land the Lord would show him. The Lord promised Abraham that he would make him into a great nation, that he would bless him, and that Abraham would be a blessing. The promise ends with these words: "And all peoples on earth will be blessed through you." We know that this blessing is ultimately fulfilled in the coming of the Messiah. In him, the nations were to be blessed. This is a theme that is found throughout the Old Testament: the expectation of the Messiah who would come to restore God's people and to whom the nations would come to receive salvation and an abundance of blessings.[83]

Application

Abraham was seventy-five years old when God called him, so age does not need to be an obstacle to faith. He trusted God for one-hundred years, and from his experience, we can learn how to walk by faith and live to please the Lord. Abraham's life is an example for all Christians who want to walk by faith. His life was characterized by obedience and faithfulness. The call of Abraham included two promises: the first, showing the land of his future posterity; and the second, that in his posterity, all the earth was to be blessed.[84]

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[83] Jamison, Faussett, Brown *Bible Commentary*.

[84] Bible Exposition Commentary-Old Testament, pg. 1.

Conclusion

African-American megachurches spend a lot of time and resources in order to strategize and develop elaborate evangelistic campaigns. The emergence of social media and internet visibility allows them to reach masses of people on a daily basis. The emphasis of the Great Commission is still relevant in the present age.

African-American megachurches have to rely on a large number of elderly volunteers and retirees to provide staff support for growing congregations. These retirees are still able to provide outstanding staff support, in spite of their various age differences. The minimal cost of providing personnel benefits is essential for these megachurches attempting to increase staff in light of some budgetary restraints.

Biblical Examples of Evangelism

1) Andrew led Peter to Christ – John 1:40-41.

2) Philip led Nathanael to the Master – John 1:44-45.

3) Peter and John at the gate called Beautiful interacted with the lame man – Acts 3:2-8.

4) Philip left a successful revival work in the city, led by the Holy Spirit of God, to go down into the desert at the providential moment to meet with an Ethiopian. A confused Philip left his home to bring the Ethiopian to Christ – Acts 8:30-35.

5) Ananias had the rare honor of ushering Saul (later Paul) out of darkness into the light – Acts 9:13-18.

6) Aquila and Priscilla showed Apollos the way to the Lord – Acts 18:24-26.

7) Paul and Silas, under adverse circumstances in the prison, led the jailer and his family to Christ - Acts 16:25-31.

Multi-Media and Evangelism

The internet serves as one avenue to allow the church to carry out the great commission because it allows it to share the good news about the resurrected Savior, Jesus Christ. In addition, church websites are important for those members who have relocated to other cities. It provides a way for them to stay connected with the church home base. Also, as people look for schools when moving into a new town, they often look for a church. A church website can be another opportunity to introduce church ministries to those individuals.

Many megachurches are very good with their use of multimedia in their evangelistic efforts. They use brochures in which the vision, mission, and ministry of the church are discussed. There are public service announcements (PSA's), commercials, the community calendar, the yellow pages in the phone book, advertising sections of newspapers and other periodicals. Billboards can also be used. Multimedia can even be used in worship. It is not unusual to find multimedia presentations and software programs (Microsoft PowerPoint, Adobe PageMaker, etc.) being used for various aspects of worship. Some churches use them to project announcements, conduct special presentations and more. There are many ways of communicating, but it is the

quality in the presentations that counts. Again, these are all various tools that can be

used in evangelism.

Conclusion

Each of the five themes addressed in this chapter are crucial for the African-

American megachurch to consider when approaching the topic of staffing. Each one

impacts and influences the effectiveness of the church's ability to fulfill its mission.

While a church could choose to approach each from any number of worldviews, given

that the Christian church belongs to Christ, the only valid worldview is a Christian

biblical-theological one.

A godly vision for staffing requires megachurch leaders to seek the Lord's

direction and timing for the expansion of paid and volunteer staff members to meet the

growing demands of megachurch ministries. Vision is recognized in the megachurch

through the clear articulation of the direction for the vision of the ministry through

Scripture, symbols, slogans and stories to keep the vision fresh for the people. Because

vision is communicated in the form of word pictures, church leaders will have to

formulate a vision of what the addition of a new staff member could mean – what it will

look like – to the overall ministry of the church.

A biblical understanding of leadership requires that leaders of African-American

megachurches remain faithful in their priestly role to cultivate a congregation of well-

informed members who can emulate the life and legacy of Jesus Christ. Church

leadership consists of a senior pastor, or co-pastors, surrounded by a network of paid

and volunteer clergy, and lay leader's responsible for the day-to-day operations of various church ministries. The leadership team is recognized through the faithfulness of their work, worship and witness. Biblical leadership is essential to church staffing because many pastors stand at the helm of a leadership network responsible for the day-to-day operations, as well as conveying the vision for the church to its members and to the community.

A biblical and theological understanding of stewardship is essential for megachurch leaders to maintain honesty and integrity due to the unlimited resources that they have at their disposal. These megachurch ministries have streams of income from ownership of restaurants, banquet facilities, day care centers, housing development corporations, and charter schools. It is recognized in the megachurch by providing support for many of the social outreach ministry programs sponsored by the church. Because of biblically faithful stewardship efforts, the church can provide assistance for the homeless, job training, healthcare assistance, subsidized housing, economic development and senior housing. Biblical stewardship is essential to effective and successful church staffing because sound financial practices are necessary before additional staff are added to meet the needs of a growing congregation.

A biblical understanding of spiritual gifts is essential to church staffing because the church should add staff members who not only possess various skills, but who also demonstrate a spirit of unity in order to facilitate a cohesive work environment among paid and volunteer staff members. This is important because spiritual gifts given by the Holy Spirit enable each member of the body to play a special part in the ministry of

Christ's Church. Megachurch leaders can operate in a spirit of unity if they demonstrate the genuine working out of a diversity of gifts. The leadership team, through the diversity of gifts, should be able to demonstrate how acceptance, forgiveness, support, encouragement, and the accomplishment of common goals are practiced. Spiritual gifts are recognized in the megachurch by the cooperative relationship between the leadership team, paid staff members and volunteers.

A biblical understanding of evangelism is essential to effective church staffing because the ability to bring on new staff, both paid and volunteer, is necessary to assist, welcome, nurture, and cultivate new members who will eventually become a part of the church. Quite often, evangelism efforts are intentional among megachurch members. The leadership of these churches spends considerable time and resources cultivating personal relationships with the unchurched in order to lead them to become followers of Christ. This value and emphasis on evangelism is one of the prime drivers of the church and can be seen in almost every megachurch ministry program. As such, biblical evangelism is recognized in the megachurch by the intentional mindset of creating disciples as proclaimed in the preaching of the senior pastor, communication through technology, coordinated efforts of cell groups, and well-organized evangelism campaigns throughout the community. A biblically sound theology of vision, leadership, gifting, stewardship, and evangelism can provide the African-American megachurch a rubric by which to evaluate how they staff their church for success.

Summary

Chapter Two presented an examination of megachurch staffing trends illuminated from interviews with participating pastors and from the researcher's pastoral experience. Vision, leadership, spiritual gifts, stewardship, and evangelism were identified as the most compelling dimensions of church life hindering effective staffing for African-American megachurches. To that end, from the critical lens of the aforementioned dimensions of church life, the theological framework for evaluating the participating megachurches was based upon the individual approaches, strategies, and methods to integration of staffing adopted by the megachurches.

CHAPTER 3

LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature review explores the scholarly literature regarding church management, the emergence of the megachurch, the development of the African-American megachurch, staffing philosophies, and practices of megachurches in terms of the relationship of paid and volunteer staff. The purpose of this literature review is to research and discover what others have written about church staffing trends and the use of paid versus volunteer staffing in African-American megachurches.

This chapter will examine the following:

1. Church vision within the context of the church's culture.

2. Leadership as essential for the growth and implementation of paid and volunteer staff in megachurch structure.

3. Stewardship as the venue for the allocation of finances, time, resources, space, and talent to achieve the overall ministry support for African-American megachurches.

4. The use of spiritual gifts as one of the factors for selecting candidates for staffing positions in megachurches.

5. Evangelism as a major part of an intentional effort by megachurches to recruit, train, and retain their membership base. Many of these members have never been a part of any congregational body.

Church Management

Aubrey Malphurs explained church management as combining the spiritual and the organizational.[1] Managing the staff of a church requires the same skills-set as managing any non-secular staff, because churches function much like businesses.[2] Effective church management is the appropriate administration of church resources. However, many are reluctant to label church management as a business function.[3] Essentially, whenever there are people and money involved, there must be structured business practices to ensure resources are managed appropriately. Churches are unique in that they rely on donations from members and have a responsibility to be good stewards with those resources. The ability to manage church resources effectively depends on the ministry's process of overseeing church operations.

In *Money Matters in the Church* Malphurs and Stroope[4] offered that best practices for systemic church management include: developing a strategic budget, enacting an effective audit process, projecting income and expenses, working with banks, paying staff, and addressing debt. Also, the writers encouraged church leaders to create a culture of giving that supports savvy, faithful, and legal financial practices.[5]

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[1] Aubrey Malphurs, *Advanced Strategic Planning: A New Model for Church and Ministry Leaders* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2005).

[2] Malphurs, *Advanced Strategic Planning*.

[3] Malphurs, *Advanced Strategic Planning*.

[4] Aubrey Malphurs and Steve Stroope, *Money Matters in Church: A Practical Guide for Leaders* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2007).

[5] Malphurs and Stroope, *Money Matters in Church*.

Further, the authors shared the biblical theology of stewardship and encouraged pastors

and church leaders to develop donors and maximize contributions.[6]

Additional authors, for example, John Cionca[7] and Rick Thoman[8] add to the

scholarly literature on church management. Both Cionca and Thoman insist that as a

result of the immense resources in personal and ministry development that churches no

longer have to face church management issues in isolation. A large body of scholarly

literature exists to assist in the development of the church.

In *Leading the Congregation,* Roger Heuser and Norman Shawchuck[9] described

the essential paradigms for church leaders to integrate spiritual integrity and service

within a "systems" view of the congregation and its ministry. Heuser and Shawchuck

focused the dual contexts in which church leaders must function within the

congregation, and as the congregation's representative to the community.[10] Also, the

authors explained the varying skills sets required to flourish in each. Leadership and

management is not the same thing as charisma. Rather, it is a set of attitudes, skills sets,

and practices required if individuals wish to be worthy servants of Christ.[11] In order to

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[6] Malphurs and Stroope, *Money Matters in Church*.

[7] John R. Cionca, *Personal and Ministry Development*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel).

[8] Rick Thoman, "Leadership Development, Part 1: Churches Don't Have to Go It Alone," *Christian Education Journal* 6 no. 2 (2009): 282.

[9] Norman Shawchuck and Roger Heuser. *Managing the Congregation* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2000).

[10] Shawchuck and Heuser, *Managing the Congregation*.

[11] Shawchuck and Heuser, *Managing the Congregation*.

manage, cultivate, and sustain a church, both leadership and management skills are

critical for the pastor and the church leadership team. Understanding church

management is essential in the ensuing discussion of megachurch development in

general and for African-American megachurches in particular.

Emergence of the Megachurch

Increasingly over the past few years, academic work has been published on the

topic of megachurches, especially that of Scott Thumma.[12] Thumma clarified that

megachurches are a new phenomenon and that large congregations were present from

the history of the Christian Church.[13] Eagle stated that is wrong to consider

megachurches as a new organizational structure.[14] Thumma pointed out that although

large churches have existed, for any historical period there were fewer than twelve of

these massive congregations around the world and none of which matched the

functions of megachurches in contemporary society.[15] Nearly all current megachurches

were founded after 1955.[16] The explosive growth of these congregations did not begin

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[12] Thumma and Travis, *Beyond Megachurch Myths*.

[13] Thumma and Travis, *Beyond Megachurch Myths*.

[14] David E. Eagle, "Historicizing the Megachurch," *Journal of Social History* 48 no. 3 (2015): 589-604.

[15] Eagle, "Historicizing the Megachurch."

[16] Thumma and Travis, *Beyond Megachurch Myths*.

until the 1980s; since the 1990s, the number of megachurches has grown by five

percent each year.[17]

The megachurch of today is more than a church with a huge attendance.[18]

Ellingson observed the emergence and rapid growth of the megachurch in North

America and Asia in particular marked the most significant development in the

Christianity in the past twenty to thirty years.[19] Today's megachurch is a congregation

with a distinctive pattern of organization, programmatic ministries, and membership

relations.[20] The phenomenal increase of this form of congregational life has only taken

place within the last several decades. Today's megachurch is a particular and distinctive

response to modern culture and society. The definitive traits are uniquely modern,

fashioned in reaction to and patterned after modern society.[21]

A generalized investigation of megachurches shows a distinctive set of

common characteristics. Obviously size is the most evident attribute of these

churches; however, the list of shared traits is much more extensive. There is a

discernable general pattern to the way in which religion is organized and expressed

across these large congregations.[22] Within this generalized picture, three distinctive

subgroups, or ways of expressing the megachurch message, can be identified as the

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[17] Thumma and Travis, *Beyond Megachurch Myths*.

[18] Thumma and Travis, *Beyond Megachurch Myths*.

[19] Stephen Ellingson, "New Research on Megachurches," *The New Blackwell Companion to the Sociology of Religion* (2010): 245-266.

[20] Ellingson, "New Research on Megachurches.

[21] Ellingson, "New Research on Megachurches.

[22] Ellingson, "New Research on Megachurches.

"nontraditional," the "conventional," and the "composite."[23] As with all general descriptions of social phenomena, any single megachurch will vary in its embodiment of this full set of characteristics. Nevertheless, these congregations have too much in common not to be seen as a distinctive social and religious reality.

African-American Megachurches

However, while the research of Thumma and countless others is valuable, little if any scholarly research has focused on predominantly African-American megachurches. While there have been several recent journalistic accounts of the Black megachurch phenomenon, there is a limited amount of empirical information on the general characteristics and dynamics of these churches.

Kendra Barber stated despite the proliferation of research on black churches and the solutions they offer to social inequality, very little is known about African-American megachurches.[24] Further, there is even less known about the extent to which religious traditions and theological orientations moderate megachurch differences in approaches to social inequality.[25] Given the dramatic growth of African-American megachurches over the past three decades, a comprehensive understanding of African-American

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[23] Ellingson, "New Research on Megachurches.

[24] Kendra Barber, "The Black Megachurch: Theology, Gender, and the Politics of Public Engagement," *Sociology of Religion* 73, no. 1 (2012): 102-103.

[25] Barber, "The Black Megachurch."

religion must be explored between and across group differences in organizational

responses to social inequalities in America.[26]

During early research, many black megachurches were not included in the

research data that was gathered. One of the reasons for this omission was a weakening

in communication between black and white ethnic communities, especially following

the Civil Rights and Black Power decades of the 1960s and 1970s.[27]

The independent nature of large congregations made it difficult to gather

reliable information in some instances. This same difficulty has also been experienced

by some black denominational national offices that have sought to gather information

about churches in their own national group.[28] In *The Black Megachurch: Theology,*

Gender, and the Politics of Public Engagement, Tamelyn Tucker-Worgs attempts to

address this gap in the scholarly literature.[29] After her study of over 150 African-

American megachurches, Tucker-Worgs maintained that contemporary African-

American megachurches fulfill the socio-religious needs of black middle-class

suburbanites in the same ways storefront churches of the early twentieth century

fulfilled the needs of black migrants from the South.[30]

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[26] Barber, "The Black Megachurch.

[27] John Vaughn, *Megachurches and America's Cities* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1993), 22.

[29] Tucker-Worgs, *Black Megachurch*

[30] Tucker-Worgs, *Black Megachurch*.

Sandra Barnes stated that an explosion of thriving African-American megachurches has changed the landscape of American religious life.[31] Celebrating memberships often into the tens of thousands and meeting within both highly ornamented walls and revamped warehouse buildings, African-American megachurches are "contemporary fruits" of the Civil Rights Movement and hold many of the resources necessary to address America's contemporary social disparities.[32]

Cherly Townsend Gilkes offered the contemporary African-American church is a product of the social movements of the 1960s.[33] Alongside the rapid growth of megachurches, there are several important features shaping the church of the twenty-first century: (1) a transformation of consciousness that combines black consciousness with Christian ethics; (2) a rapid expansion of the African-American middle class and the geographic and social relocation of the new middle class; (3) the professionalization of a highly literate laity in terms of the quality of services it demands and the professionalized voluntarism it offers; and (4) changing gender relations evidenced by a continued dependence on women's work and growing numbers of women in ministry, along with a focus on the social problems of African-American males, especially among the urban poor.[34] The tradition of adaptation to change remains strong as these new

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[31] Barnes, *Black Megachurch Culture*.

[32] Barnes, *Black Megachurch Culture*.

[33] Cheryl Townsend Gilkes,"Plenty Good Room: Adaptation in a Changing Black Church" *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 558, no. 1 (1998): 101-121.

[34] Gilkes, "Plenty Good Room."

features are utilized to combine the work of traditional religion with efforts to pursue social justice and economic equity. The African-American megachurch is responding to the challenges of modern society by using the tools of secular success: economic development, political clout, and social responsibility.[35]

Vision

George Barna stated, "Vision for ministry is a clear mental image of a preferable future imparted by God to His chosen servants and is based upon an accurate understanding of God, self and circumstances."[36] Vision is an essential element of any effective ministry. Proverbs 29:18 states, "Where there is no vision, the people perish." Vision is never about maintaining the status quo. Vision is about stretching reality to extend beyond the existing state. Vision concentrates on the future. It focuses on thinking ahead rather than on dwelling upon or seeking to replicate the past.[37]

Malphurs stated that strong leaders have vision that is both far-reaching and focused on the details.[38] Having that vision is what separates the church with an assortment of ineffective programs and activities from churches that reach people effectively, efficiently, and consistently.[39]

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[35] Cheryl Hall-Russell, "The African American Megachurch: Giving and Receiving," *New Directions for Philanthropic Fundraising* 2005, no. 48 (2005): 21-29.

[36] George Barna, *Power of Vision* (Ventura, CA: Regal Books, 1992), 28.

[37] Barna, *Power of Vision*, 28.

[38] Aubrey Malphurs, *Developing a Vision for Ministry* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2015).

[39] Malphurs, *Developing a Vision for Ministry*.

As such, African-American megachurches have to continue to describe the mental portrait for others in order for the vision to materialize. The need for additional staff and volunteers must be constantly reinforced before the congregational body. The vision for ministry must be a clear image so that others can visualize the same vision and share in its implementation and impact.

According to Galindo, a vision is a clear image in the mind of the leader of what the preferable future of the congregation will look like.[40] Vision is a function of leadership, and it is the leader who must provide it. Vision is directly related to the values of the leader and to his or her willingness to commit every resource available to realizing that vision. Vision is not acquired by consensus; it is an exclusive function of leadership.[41] Vision enables the congregational system's ability to reach consensus. Initially, vision will be resisted. It brings risk, and it will challenge the pastor and congregational leaders to grow into areas unfamiliar to them.

A genuine and authentic vision will outlive the visionary. Vision is not about organizational development, effective management, or measurable results. A true vision is generative; it is about investing in the present to create a future. An authentic vision is about changing people's lives, their way of thinking, what they value and how they relate to each other and to the world. Providing vision is the leader's prerogative; in a small congregation, that leadership function falls to the pastoral leader. The pastor must work with other congregational leaders to help shape the vision, but ultimately,

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[40] Galindo, *Hidden Lives of Congregations*, 141.

[41] Galindo, *Hidden Lives of Congregations*, 141.

the congregation will look to its primary pastoral shepherd to help it discover this vision.[42]

Veteran church consultant Carl George suggests four questions to ask in developing and presenting a vision to a church:

1. What? What do you see that God wants you to accomplish in your place of ministry? If you do not sense a vision from God for a ministry that's too big for one pastor, don't even think about presenting the idea of multiple staff to your board.

2. How? How does God want it done? In various Old Testament accounts, God not only told his people what he wanted them to do, but often told them how to do it.

3. Who? By whom should the vision be accomplished? At times, God even determined who should be involved in the process of getting the job done. He declared, "Judah shall go first in fighting against the Benjamites."[43]

4. When? God sometimes moves quickly and other times ask his servants to wait. God's timing is important, especially when adding the first staff member.[44]

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[42] Galindo, *Hidden Lives of Congregations*, 141.

[43] Judges 20:13-18.

[44] Toler, *Practical Guide to Hiring Staff*, 14-15.

Bishop Rueben P. Job defines and describes a vision as a gift from God and the

reward of disciplined, faithful, and patient listening to God.[45] Job stated,

> Vision allows us to see beyond the visible, beyond the barriers and obstacles to
> our mission. Vision catches us up, captivates and compels us to act. Vision is the
> gift of eyes of faith to see the invisible, to know the unknowable, to think the
> unthinkable, to experience the not yet. Vision allows us to see signs of the
> kingdom now, in our mist.[46]

The development of strategy to accomplish goals is often the missing link among leaders

with great vision, but limited success in achieving that vision. According to James M.

Kouzes and Barry Z. Posner,

> Every organization, every social movement begins with a dream. The dream or
> vision is the force that invents the future. In order for that future to be realized,
> leaders need to develop a plan to take them and their followers from where they
> are to where they want to be. Often, that plan turns out to be a series of plans
> or strategies that accomplish various goals on the way to realizing the vision.[47]

Leadership

The need for leadership is evidenced in a powerful way in the church as it

struggles to transition into the twenty-first century. George Barna comments on the

church's need for leaders:

> I have reached several conclusions regarding the future of the Christian Church
> in America. The central conclusion is that the American church is dying due to a
> lack of strong leadership. In this time of unprecedented opportunity and

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[45] Rueben P. Job, *Three Simple Rules: A Wesleyan Way of Living* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2010).

[46] Lovett H. Weems, *Church Leadership: Vision, Team, Culture and Integrity* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 1973), 38.

[47] John Borex, Danny Lovett, and Elmer Towns, *The Good Book on Leadership* (Nashville, TN: Broadman, 2005), 241.

plentiful resources, the church is actually losing influence. The primary reason is the lack of leadership. Nothing is more important than leadership.[48]

Leadership is a critical factor in a church of any size. Pastors are often the center of attention, whether the church is large or small. The reality for all clergy, no matter the church size, is that the congregation bestows upon them some degree of personal power. When they are chosen to lead the church spiritually, and to function as God's spokesperson to the flock, they are given a significant degree of authority. This power dynamic varies considerably across religious traditions and leadership structures, but it is always present, even if it is seldom discussed. The mantle of the congregational leader carries with it a level of power and authority, which can increase as the church grows. In part, the success of the church is attributed to the skill of the senior minister.[49]

The founder of the church who typically doubles as a dynamic preacher, often directs institutional affairs. Most megachurch pastors envision a strategic vision of growth for the church and depend on a combination of associate pastors, directors, deacons, or staff members to implement that vision.[50] Additional growth usually results from the church's ability to offer a wide selection of attractive programs, including worship services, daycare, youth programs, recreational activities, Sunday school classes

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[48] Aubrey Malphurs and Will Mancin, *Building Leaders* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2004), 12.

[49] Thumma and Travis, *Beyond Megachurches Myths*, 55.

[50] Darren Grem, "Megachurches," *New Georgia Encyclopedia*, accessed January 15, 2016, http://www.georgiaencyclopedia.org/articles/arts-culture/megachurches.

and small group Bible studies. Enormous budgets, some reaching tens of millions of

dollars, keep such programs fully staffed, funded and running year round.[51]

There is no denying that megachurches are reflections of the leadership abilities

of a senior pastor or directional leader. Almost always, the megachurch pastor is the

most prominent and high-profile position in the congregation. The pastor is the center

of the staff, and the energy hub around which the congregation revolves.

Leadership of a megachurch does take a considerable amount of ego strength.

However, leadership of any organization this size can lead to constant challenges,

headaches, and criticism. It takes confidence and resoluteness to continue, in spite of

these challenges. Clearly, those pastors who have started churches that have grown to

megachurch size have leadership gifts that have been demonstrated and proven. They

are responsible for piloting the church's development and guiding it successfully

through its many phases of growth. As such, it is no surprise that everyone in the

congregation looks to these pastors as uniquely gifted leaders.[52]

The Black Church demands that the pastor lead even if he wanted to lag behind

in humble fashion, the people would push him to the front of the army and openly

criticize him if he did not move them forward.[53]

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[51] Grem, "Megachurches."

[52] Scott and Travis, *Beyond Megachurches Myths*, 57.

[53] Floyd Massey, Jr., and Samuel Berry McKinney, *Church Administration in the Black Prospective* (Valley Forge, PA: Judson, 2003), 28.

The pastor was expected to provide counseling for the home and the church, teacher, civic leader with ready answers, employment specialist and an advocate for the oppressed, defeated, and disenfranchised. Historically, the black laity has given no other individual the respect and reverence granted by the black church.[54]

It is clear, though, that in many megachurches the senior pastor is the dominant driver of the vision and mission for the church and often the catalyst for its growth. This is especially the case for those pastors who are the founders of their churches, or who are responsible for growing an established congregation to megachurch proportions. The senior minister preached most sermons, but it was the message more than the messenger that many of the participants found attractive. Megachurch pastors tend to lead their churches and drive their teams based on a clear vision and purpose, which is articulated frequently and in various ways to tie the system together, and as such they are its central figure.

In 2000, almost every black megachurch was led by charismatic men whose average age was forty-nine years old. These were a highly educated group of clergy; many had doctoral degrees, or some postgraduate education. For most of these churches, the leadership has not changed since reaching megachurch numbers. Furthermore, many of these pastors founded the churches.[55]

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[54] Massey and McKinney, *Church Administration*, 13.

[55] Worgs, *Black Megachurch*, 33.

According to Thumma, the development of megachurches depends on nontraditional, charismatic, spiritual, entrepreneurial, ministerial leadership.[56] The charismatic leadership that Thumma points out as nontraditional and different is quite traditional in black churches. However, the nature of charismatic leadership dictates that it is focused on the leader himself. As of yet, very few black megachurches have experienced a leadership transition since reaching megachurch numbers.

The professional identification of today's megachurches is a result of the growth of the black middle class since the civil right era. Black professionals such as doctors, lawyers, and CPAs sit in the pews. Consequently, members demand a higher level of professionalism from the ministry and their ministers.[57] Trustee boards are now often comprised of trained financial service professionals. Educators and college students participate in church tutoring and mentoring programs, even as many congregations now operate their own schools.[58]

Gender provides an interesting look as to how black megachurch leadership is distinct from and mimics black churches. Women make up the vast majority of members in black churches, and scholars have found that they serve as organizers of church activities and volunteers in the church ministries and auxiliaries. However,

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[56] Worgs, *Black Megachurch*, 34.

[57] J.L. Walton, *For Where Two or Three (Thousand) Are Gathered in My Name: A Cultural History and Ethical Analysis of African Megachurches* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard, 2011), 143.

[58] Walton, *Where Two or Three*, 143.

women have generally been confined to lay membership and are restricted from several aspects of lay and ministerial leadership.[59]

Although many of the black megachurches have women co-pastors, assistant pastors, and associate pastors, women members of trustee boards, and women members of deacons' boards, just as the senior pastor positions are reserved for men, these other leadership positons are also male dominated. So while there seem to be more opportunities for leadership for women in black megachurches, there is still a "stained glass ceiling".[60]

The leadership team of the profiled black megachurches consists of a senior pastor, or co-pastors, surrounded by a network of paid and volunteer clergy and lay leaders responsible for the day-to-day logistics. The size of the staff corresponds with the church size and the number and type of programs offered. Responsibilities are multifaceted because leaders tend to have both spiritual and administrative roles. In addition, it is crucial that they espouse, and can succinctly articulate, the church's stance and pastor's vision. Although black megachurches may have a large number of clergy who are members, this does not mean they are automatically tapped for leadership. Those who serve as leaders must complete a rigorous vetting process that typically includes formal education, internal church training, and recommendations from other well-respected church leaders who are part of the pastor's inner circle.[61]

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[59] Worgs, *Black Megachurch*, 34.

[60] Worgs, *Black Megachurch*, 34.

[61] Barnes, *Black Megachurch Culture*, 87.

Stewardship

Christian stewardship is the acknowledgement of God's ownership, the acceptance of our trusteeship of life and possessions, and the administration of the same according to the will of God.[62] It is the practice of systematic and proportionate giving of time, abilities, and material possessions, based on the conviction that these are trusts from God to be used in His service for the benefit of all humanity in grateful acknowledgment of Christ's redeeming love.[63]

Churches typically have a ministry vision that is greater than the staff's ability to fulfill. Thus, it becomes a priority to identify and employ the skills and talents of volunteers. The important roles volunteers can play in the ministry of a church ought never be dismissed or diminished. However, growing a progressive, more professional, and far-reaching ministry will require the addition of professional staff at some point. No matter how faithful volunteers might be, they are generally people who have full-time responsibilities or jobs, and serve the church on the side. Professional staff are able to contribute more consistently not only because of their training, but because, as with anyone, their vocation is high on their list of priorities. Paid staff can also be held accountable to higher standards than volunteers.[64]

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[62] Glover, *Plain Talk on Christian Stewardship*, 10.

[63] Glover, *Plain Talk on Christian Stewardship*, 10.

[64] Floyd H. Flake, Elaine M. Flake, and Edwin C. Reed, *African-American Church Management Handbook* (Prussia, PA: Judson, 2005), 16.

Churches typically consider whether they can afford to hire another staff person. Still, when a church reaches a certain level and aspires to continue to grow, it must also conduct a needs assessment to determine whether it can afford not to hire new staff. For example, if a church begins to receive government funding, or is working with financial institutions to secure loans, expectations of quality in financial statements increase markedly. A chief financial officer who understands finance will be of greater value than a bookkeeper who may be an excellent keeper of financial records but whose qualifications do not meet the standards of the funding entity.

There is almost always a correlation between a growing church and increased financial resources. Thus, adding staff should result in additional ministry and in growth, including financial growth. Churches should plan for continued growth, which justifies the hiring of additional staff.[65]

McIntosh poses a question important to the size transition between the medium and large church: "Is the church staffed to decline, remain on a plateau, or grow?"[66] How a congregation answers this question is crucial because the growth of the church depends on adding staff, and adding staff is a daunting challenge. Real financial strain is the major issue most churches face when they are deciding whether to add staff. McIntosh contends that when a church waits until it can afford another staff member,

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[65] Flake, Flake and Reed, *African-American Church Management Handbook*, 17.

[66] Flake, Flake and Reed, *African-American Church Management Handbook*, 17.

the growth opportunities have already become limited.[67] Hesitation in taking a faith

step and providing financially for a new staff member can keep a church stuck on a

plateau between medium and large sizes, and prevent it from reaching to become a

large church.[68]

There are growing lists of megachurches that are on the verge of foreclosing.

Reasons vary but they include diminishing offerings due to increased unemployment

among congregants coupled with increased needs in the community.[69] Scott Thumma

and Dave Travis's *Beyond Megachurch Myths*,[70] published just prior to the near global

economic meltdown offer a warning about economic downturn. Many megachurches

carry "megadebt" on their facilities, and the authors predicted that an economic

collapse would lead to the reduction of staff and unfavorable renegotiations of debt.[71]

Sometimes, churches are prone to expand staff before they have a clear picture

of how they will handle the additional financial load. What will the new staff member's

compensation involve? Will it include housing allowance, pension, health insurance,

social security reimbursement (in the case of clergy), and an allowance for professional

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[67] Beth Ann Gaede, *Size Transitions in Congregations*, (Durham, NC: The Alban Institute, 2001), 124, 125.

[68] Gaede, *Size Transitions in Congregations*, 124.

[69] G. Barnette, "Ebenezer Church Officials Dispute Reuters Article" in *AFRO*, Washington, D.C./Baltimore, 2010.

[70] Thumma and Travis, *Beyond Megachurch Myths*.

[71] Thumma and Travis, *Beyond Megachurch Myths*.

expenses, such as mileage reimbursement, book purchases, and subscriptions to professional magazines?

While churches have used Community Development Corporations (CDCs) to build senior housing and other businesses for more than fifty years, the number of churches creating CDCs to construct a larger variety of building projects and social services projects has greatly increased.[72] Additionally, more churches are teaming up with other 501c3 nonprofits to partner in building schools, health clinics, and daycare centers, restaurants, boutiques, bookstores, and countless other initiatives that benefit the community.[73]

An increase in the number of churches engaging in this trend is long overdue. Given the continued myriad of problems that continue to plague the African-American community, and the fact that the church is still a primary resource used by so many that are suffering, churches must begin to collaborate.

African-Americans have made economic gains, and the number of specialized ministries in churches has increased. More churches now offer counseling, social services (or at least referrals to social work agencies), senior programs and activities, and Christian education and children and youth ministries run by paid staff. Many of those paid staff are specially trained for their respective areas of ministry. This trend had been slow in taking hold given the models of church organization and administration that primarily focused on paying pastors, musicians and clerical staff.

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[72] Martha Simmons, *Trends in The Black Church* (Hope for Life International, 2005), 12.

[73] Simmons, *Trends in The Black Church*, 12.

Spiritual Gifts

For Judeo-Christians, spiritual gifts or charismata are endowments which may be given by the Holy Spirit.[74] These are the supernatural graces which individual Christians need in modern times or needed in the days of the Apostles to fulfil the mission of the church.[75] Leslie Flynn explained, although the concept of spiritual gifts and the term charismata are frequently used today, Charismata is a Greek word meaning "gifts of grace."[76] It refers to the gifts or special abilities given to Christians by the Holy Spirit.[77]

The Bible tells us that God has given every believer one or more spiritual gifts to build up the Body of Christ. It is imperative for Christians to discover, understand, and develop their God-given gifts.[78] William McRae and William J. McRae stated many churches have hardly begun to tap the potential of spiritual gifts among their congregants.[79] Many Christians have settled for far less than God intends because many

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[74] Leslie B. Flynn, *19 Gifts of the Spirit* (Colorado Springs, CO: David C Cook, 1994).

[75] Flynn, *19 Gifts of the Spirit*.

[76] Flynn, *19 Gifts of the Spirit*.

[77] Flynn, *19 Gifts of the Spirit*.

[78] Don Fortune, Katie Fortune, and Jane Hoyt, *Discover Your God-Given Gifts* (Grand Rapids, MI: Chosen Books, 2009).

[79] William McRae and William J. McRae, *The Dynamics of Spiritual Gifts* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1982).

have never discovered or developed their spiritual gifts.[80] C. Peter Wagner cautioned

that Christians find their spiritual gifts and use them to serve God's people.[81]

Some individuals have gifts of administration. When writing about spiritual gifts,

Paul included administrators in his listings of gifts in 1 Corinthians 12:28 and in other

places. In Ephesians 4:12, he said the gifts were given for the immediate equipping of

the children of God for the work of service; administration is an enabling gift. As

believers come together and form a church, administration enables the members to

identify and clarify their purpose.

Paul most clearly presented the equipping ministry model in Ephesians 4:11-16.

There, he presents the relationship between those persons given to be apostles,

prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers, to the people of God, the church. He

identified the relationship in functional terms, not in terms of static position, or

governing authority. He plainly declared the function of the recipients of the gifts to be

God's gifts to the church for the immediate equipment of God's people for works of

service.[82]

Paul referred to this concept in other passages, as well.[83] However, a better

characterization of good church administration than that which he gave in Ephesians 4 is

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[80] McRae and McRae, *Dynamics of Spiritual Gifts*.

[81] C. Peter Wagner, *Your Spiritual Gifts Can Help Your Church Grow* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2012).

[82] Charles A. Tidwell, *Church Administration: Effective Leadership for Ministry* (Nashville, TN: Broadman, 1985), 43.

[83] 1 Corinthians 12:14-31.

not forthcoming. The early church expanded rapidly, "Because of the leverage achieved when the few with special gifts saw their task as the training of the many to exercise those gifts which belong to every believer."[84]

A daunting aspect of the staffing issue as it relates to spiritual gifts is how new staff members will work with the existing staff members and the members of the church. Most pastors have probably discovered that finding staff members whose gifts, personality, and work ethic complement the staff team is one of the most difficult areas of the pastorate.[85]

Due to difficult staff relationships in many African-American megachurches, some of the members were suspicious of any changes suggested by the pastor or staff.[86] Consequently, some became critical of the staff and the changes.[87] The changes threatened the keepers of the church's history and the people in existing positions of power. As the prospective staff member is considered, the gracious calling of God must be clear to the pastor and church, so that they can work together to build the kingdom of God. However, in the end, the pastor and church must successfully work together to add staff before the transition to the next size can be completed.[88]

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[84] Tidwell, *Church Administration*, 44.

[85] Fortune, Fortune, and Hoyt, *Discover Your God-Given Gifts*.

[86] Simmons, *Trends in the Black Church*.

[87] Simmons, *Trends in the Black Church*.

[88] Graede, *Size Transitions in Congregations*, 125.

Megachurches have multiple associate pastors whose job it is to provide pastoral care for members of the congregation.[89] Often, church staffs include well-trained specialized pastors or certified laypersons that focus on care and crisis situations. Additionally, congregational members are often identified, encouraged, and trained to provide care and ministry to one another both formally and informally.[90] In a smaller church, these duties would fall to a pastoral staff member, or most likely, to the solitary pastor. Finally, many megachurches handle member care and personal issues through their small group systems, with group leaders reporting issues to their oversight pastors.[91]

Evangelism

Evangelism was an essential and critical component in the staffing trends of African-American megachurches when we examined paid versus volunteer staffing patterns. Many of these churches have radio and television listeners, live streaming, vast use of the internet and many other social media outlets to promote a stronger evangelistic presence on a local, national and international level. The emphasis on evangelism flows through the senior pastor to the attendees.

Evangelism programs that speak to the needs of community and congregation are important, but the marketing of those programs is also essential to church growth.

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[89] Simmons, *Trends in the Black Church*.

[90] Simmons, *Trends in the Black Church*.

[91] Thumma and Travis, *Beyond Megachurch Myths*, 113.

Often, pastors and churches have outstanding ideas for winning people to Christ, and for increasing their membership. However, the way these programs are marketed is critical to sustaining long-term growth.[92]

Previously, we mentioned the value of verbal communication in spreading the good news of the church's ministry.[93] Traditionally, this works well in African-American communities. Service professionals build their practices in the black community by word of mouth. If people have a good experience and are satisfied, they will recommend a professional to others. This is true of the church, too.

We live in a world where people are continually bombarded by marketing and advertising strategies. The propagation of information about a particular product is indispensable for success in selling that product to society. The advertising budgets of major corporations contain billions of dollars, because executives understand the necessity of disseminating the word about their product.

Successful evangelism programs understand the value and necessity of developing good marketing strategies to reach specific populations. African-American megachurches intentionally market their current programs to the larger community in order to build their church.[94] In what ways are your current programs being marketed to the larger community in order to build your church? Today, church growth requires

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[92] Carlyle Fielding Stewart, III, *African-American Church Growth* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 1994), 124.

[93] Stewart, *African-American Church Growth*, 28.

[94] Stewart, *African-American Church Growth*, 125.

that programs, ministries, and the unique offerings of the church be propagated to wider audiences. Such marketing can take the form of regular mass mailings, radio and television advertisement, the persistent involvement of church members in significant community programs, or the advertising of specific church programs geared toward bringing new people into the flock. There are literally thousands of ways to market the church in order to successfully increase membership.[95]

Many megachurches aggressively market their worship, educational, and leadership resources; several have established quasi-denominational associations that expand the influence of the nondenominational evangelical tradition.[96]

Megachurch leaders show that a majority of pastors have a strong gift, desire, and passion for reaching out to those who are not presently churched. Their stated passionate and sincere objective is to turn unbelievers into believers, and to enlarge the number of persons who are Christ's disciples.[97] These senior pastors strive to increase the Kingdom of God, rather than solely the number at their churches. That enthusiasm and drive to reach the lost becomes contagious in a congregation. It is not that these pastors neglect the task of nurturing existing believers; rather, their personal zeal is toward reaching nonbelievers. Those megachurch pastors with the strongest passion and calling to be evangelists spend considerable time cultivating personal relationships

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[95] Stewart, *African-American Church Growth*, 125.

[96] Stephen Ellingson, *The Megachurch and The Mainline* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago, 2007), 7.

[97] Thumma and Travis, *Beyond Megachurch Myths*, 64.

with the unchurched in order to lead them to become followers of Christ. The

evangelistic bent is a near obsession for some megachurch leaders.[98]

Megachurches excel at creating the structures and programs that help new

people become incorporated into the church, rather than drift away, at least at higher

rates than other churches.[99] Additionally, these megachurches have more to offer in

terms of programs and ministries, activities and fellowship groups. They make more

effort to get a wide variety of people involved in the life of the church. This is much

easier for these large churches because they have a greater variety of groups and

activities in which folks can get involved.

In addition to the megachurches' and their members' active involvement in

evangelism and the integration of newcomers, there is yet another key ingredient to

their evangelistic success. Like many things in the megachurch, evangelism begins with

the vision and passion of the pastor. According to Thumma and Travis, they discovered

that those churches that have grown to "mega" proportions in a short period of time

are led by senior pastors who have a personal passion, desire, and call to evangelism.[100]

Remember that megachurches do not start with a worship service of over two

thousand people. Though some have grown quickly past that attendance level, we have

yet to hear of one that started with two thousand on its first Sunday. The bottom line

for megachurches is that they attract and retain more people over time than other

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[98] Thumma and Travis, *Beyond Megachurch Myths*, 64.

[99] Thumma and Travis, *Beyond Megachurch Myths*, 64.

[100] Thumma and Travis, *Beyond Megachurch Myths*, 191.

churches. Worship and evangelism are factors directly related to this growth. The

enthusiasm that attendees have about their church's worship is a key reason as well.

Some megachurches use low-key evangelistic programs to target special age or

interest groups.[101] These may include sports programs for all ages that are designed to

be less competitive than many public recreation programs, and they include elements of

faith sharing. These programs have proven highly popular for many and offer yet

another avenue in the life of the congregation.

Summary

The issue of megachurch staffing is a growing concern among pastors and church

leaders. Much of the literature suggests that although there is a trend indicating church

expansion, one of the most critical issues for megachurches is staffing and adequate

accommodation of the congregation.[102] The major concern for pastors and church

leaders is how to facilitate optimal leadership and how to engage in maximized church

management skills regarding paid-versus non-paid or volunteer staff.

Volunteers contribute to the production of goods and services by easing the

burden of the paid workforce while not increasing costs. Today's volunteers tend to be

highly trained, skilled professionals looking for a place to invest their time and skills.

Churches are the largest single recipient of many volunteers' efforts. Despite this fact,

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[101] Thumma and Travis, *Beyond Megachurch Myths*, 164.

[102] Thumma and Travis, *Beyond Megachurch Myths*, 113.

volunteerism is on the decline in churches.[103] The questions remains: How can pastors

and church leaders of megachurches optimize their skills set in church leadership and

church management to best anticipate, facilitate, and resolve the issue of staffing.

Through methodical consideration and analysis of the Christian concepts and

management issues aforementioned in chapter three, pastors and church leaders will be

better equipped to manage the current-day issue of staffing. The illuminated foci for

pastors and church leaders were as follows: (1) vision within the context of the church's

culture, (2) leadership as essential for the growth and implementation of paid and

volunteer staff, (3) stewardship as the venue for the allocation of finances, time,

resources, space, and talent to achieve the overall ministry support, (4) the use of

spiritual gifts as one of the factors for selecting candidates for staffing positions, and (5)

evangelism as a major part of an intentional effort to recruit, train, and retain their

membership base. Thus, as many megachurch members have never been a part of any

congregational body, while others have been long-standing members, pastors and

church leaders on the aforementioned tenets as best practices and logical cultivation of

the Body of Christ.

Conclusion

The literature review provided some valuable insight in the staffing trends of

African-American megachurches as it relates to paid versus volunteer staffing. The

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[103] Jason Berton Golden, "An Examination of the Volunteer Coordinator's Influence on Church Volunteers' Intent-to-Continue at the Largest Protestant Churches" (2015).

amount of literature on African-American megachurches is not as extensive, when

considering the amount of literature available on megachurches in general. Importantly,

the literature review revealed that key dynamics of African-American Christianity and

church life are missing in among scholarly literature.

The following chapter introduces the research methodology used in this thesis

project. The thesis project included interviews and questionnaires with over twenty

African-American megachurches with membership ranging from fifteen-thousand

members to two-thousand members.

Forward: The Project Vision

The researcher for the current study has a wealthy background and unwavering

commitment to providing education and services to the local community, the state, and the

nation. For example, I served as Moderator for the Gethsemane Baptist Association, Adjunct

Professor of Religion at Lutheran Southern Seminary in Columbia, SC, received the Dr. Martin

Luther King, Jr. Leadership Award presented by Midlands Coalition of Churches, The Community

Service Award presented by The Columbia Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta, Incorporated, and the

Presidential Citation Award by Morris College, Sumter, SC, where I serve on the Board of

Trustees for Morris College.

Currently, I am the pastor of the Central Baptist Church (CBC) at 3625 Clement

Road in Columbia, South Carolina, where I have served as the senior pastor for over

twenty years. I was instrumental in leading the CBC family in the construction of a new

four-million dollar ministry complex complete with a new sanctuary, administrative and

educational building, and family life center. Under my leadership, CBC established a

Community Development Cooperation that provides affordable housing to those in the community. In addition, CBC recently purchased the old Sunset Shopping Center, a forty-thousand square foot shopping center, along with 8.5 acres of land that will be transformed into an economic development center to serve and meet the needs of the surrounding community. I am also a Senior Vice-President with Primerica Financial Services and a Registered Principal with Met Life Investors. The researcher concluded the most significant issue facing aspiring and developing African-American megachurches was the issue of clear direction, support, and organization. Thus, given the realistic experience in developing a megachurch without the benefit of a blueprint or a tried and true organizational guide, the researcher envisioned using this current thesis opportunity to provide the research basis for developing a manual and other resources to help denominational and congregational leadership be more effective and theologically aligned in their staffing endeavors.

CHAPTER 4

PROJECT DESIGN

Chapter one provided an introduction of the examination of the current thesis topic: Staffing Trends in African-American Megachurches. Chapter two provided a theological framework for this study and summarized several biblical themes, connecting the biblical significance on staffing trends. Chapter three served as the literature review and explored the scholarly literature regarding church management, the emergence of the megachurch, the development of the African-American megachurch, staffing philosophies, and practices of megachurches in terms of the relationship of paid and volunteer staff. The purpose of this literature review was to research and discover what others have written about church staffing trends and the use of paid versus volunteer. Chapter four provides a brief overview of the thesis topic and discusses the project design, project rationale, survey design, and project implementation. The aim of the chapter is to explain the methodology of the study and to explain the benefit of using case study research as a guide for the selected qualitative research design for the study.

A Brief Overview of the Thesis Topic

Megachurches are congregations with an average attendance of two-thousand persons during the weekend worship services.[1] This project was designed to examine how the African-American megachurch would address common problems within the black communities. African-American megachurches have provided critical community programs through social action ministries and mission, such as food and clothing drives, prison ministries, family-oriented events, assistance with housing costs and utilities, and activities for children and youth. Similarly, spiritual-based and administrative efforts such as Christian education, greeters, elders, trustees, deacons and nurses remain in place to meet the needs of the growing church.[2]

Cafeteria-style programs are the norm; often, the majority of African-American megachurches are "full-service" institutions that provide programs seven days a week, 24 hours a day. In the African-American megachurch environment, activities often associated with secular spaces such as dances, theatres, corporations, bands, youth step and drum teams are appropriated, expanded, and influenced by Christian tenets. African-American traditions in general, and African-American church cultural tools in particular, – some more directly and others because of location—have expanded to meet the ever-growing African-American church.[3]

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[1] Scott Thumma and Warren Bird, "Changes in American Megachurches: Tracing Eight Years of Growth and Innovation in the Nation's Largest-Attendance Congregations" (2008).

[2] Sandra L. Barnes, *Black Mega-Church Culture Models for Education and Empowerment* (Washington, DC: Peter Lang, 2010), 156.

[3] Barnes, *Black Mega-Church Culture Models*, 157.

Due to the tremendous growth in membership, and the establishment of schools, community development corporations, housing corporations, banquet and cafeteria facilities, medical clinics, and other ministry venues, this project examined how staffing needs were developed to ensure sustainability and to meet the exponential growth needs of the various ministries and outreach programs.

The biblical inspiration for the current thesis was anchored in the shared theological principles employed by twenty African-American megachurches: (1) demonstrated trust in the leadership, (2) demonstrated faith in the vision, and (3) demonstrated dependence in being guided by the Holy Spirit, and by the power of prayer. Thus, the paramount compass and premier guidance for the thesis, as biblical research investigation, examined the theology of staffing trends in African-American megachurches in the following areas: vision, leadership, spiritual gifts, stewardship, and evangelism.

Project Design

This thesis is an exploratory study focused on the African-American megachurch. As Creswell explained, case study research must begin with the selection of a specific case.[4] The current project was designed with the primary goal of mining information obtained from church leaders of African-American megachurches. The purpose of the

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[4] J.W. Creswell, *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches*, 3rd ed. (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publishers, 2009).

study was to examine the perceptions of church leaders from selected African-American

megachurches who recognize the plethora of critical issues facing aspiring and

developing African-American megachurches, particularly, the issue of staffing.

The survey for the project was designed based upon methodological research

best practices. Creswell suggested that survey design is often the best way to get

information and feedback used in planning and program improvement.[5] Flyberg added

that through strategic design and implementation, a survey is a systematic process used

in gathering information on a specific topic by asking questions of individuals and then

generalizing the results to the groups represented by the respondents.[6] Therefore,

survey was designed as the most accessible methodology for acquiring the requisite

knowledge to gain a greater understanding of the topic at hand.

Creswell suggested that the development of the survey should take into

consideration the following four critical questions guiding project design: (1) What is the

goal? (2) What is the target population? (3) What is the timing? and, (4) What mode will

be used?[7] The goal of the current thesis-project was to provide a platform for church

leaders of African-American megachurches to share their experiences, perceptions, and

observations. The ultimate goal was to gain an in-depth understanding of how church

leaders understand, identify, and resolve the paramount and critical issue of staffing

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[5] Creswell, *Research Design*.

[6] B. Flyybjerg, "Five Misunderstandings about Case-Study Research," Aalborg University, Denmark. (Paper) Available from: doi: 10.1177/1077800405284363 *Qualitative Inquiry* 12 no. 2 (2006): 219-245. Retrieved from http://qix.sagepub.com/content/12/2/219.short.

[7] Creswell, *Research Design*.

African-American megachurches. Thus, the target population was church leaders of African- American megachurches. The time frame for the collection of data was from six to twelve months. The mode of collection was postal mail, electronic mail, and interviews.

During the survey design process, careful consideration was given to the issues of reliability and validity. As such, the survey questions were written so that, as much as possible, each question would mean the same thing to everyone, including those administering the survey. Additionally, a major consideration in the project design and refinement was the extent to which each survey question measured the idea and concept it was intended to measure. The survey questions were reviewed by colleagues and academic mentors.

Project Rationale

The major component of the thesis research was developed using descriptive qualitative comparative case study analysis as the research model. The research design was strategically crafted in order to maximize efforts for in-depth analysis of the critical phenomenon of African-American retention and success. In order to maximize the operational experience and to best ensure that African-American megachurches are successful, the researcher was convinced that pastors, researchers, and other supports of megachurch development must design, implement, and assess blueprints, guidelines, and organizational support for African-American megachurches.

The overall significance and rationale for the present thesis was two-fold. First, the thesis provides the research basis for developing a manual and other resources to help denominational and congregational leadership be more effective and theologically aligned in their staffing endeavors. Second, the thesis sought to provide a vital tool for pastors who struggle with the implementation and integration of multiple and specialized staff members that include part-time and full-time paid staff who labor alongside volunteer staff in church ministry positions.

Creswell offered that descriptive qualitative comparative case study analysis will maximize efforts for in-depth analysis investigation of critical phenomenon.[8] Yin recommended descriptive qualitative comparative case study analysis when the purpose of the study was to understand unique features of a phenomenon in its natural setting—the church.[9] This study sought to examine the staffing practices of African-American megachurches with the intention of better understanding and illuminating insight on the staffing practices used by pastors and church leaders at African-American megachurches. The selected methodological design afforded the researcher access to church leaders of African-American megachurches who have had to deal with or have shared the current issues of staffing. Thus, the most accessible methodological design proved to be descriptive qualitative comparative case study analysis.

It should be noted that some scholars have been skeptical over the use of descriptive qualitative comparative case study research. For example, Stake, Denzin, and

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[8] Creswell, *Research Design*.

[9] Creswell, *Research Design*.

Lincoln criticized the case study model and declared case study methodology to be a

mere study selection and a deliberate research choice, but not a true methodology.[10]

However, scholars, such as, Creswell and Flyvbjerg rebutted and attempted to clarify the

significance, impact, and necessity of case study research.[11] Flyybjerg offered that there

are five common misunderstandings about case study research to include the following:

> (a) theoretical knowledge is more valuable than practical knowledge; (b) one cannot generalize from a single case, therefore, the single-case study cannot contribute to scientific development; (c) the case study is most useful for generating hypotheses, whereas other methods are more suitable for hypotheses testing and theory building; (d) the case study contains a bias toward verification; and (e) it is often difficult to summarize specific case studies.[12]

Flyberg concluded that with the increased use of case study research that the research

community would be considerably improved.[13]

In the Introduction to *The Nature of the Case Study*, Orum et al defined case

study research "as an in-depth, multifaceted investigation, using qualitative research

methods, of a single social phenomenon."[14] They also made the important point that

case study research is conducted in great detail and often relies on the use of several

data sources.[15]

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[10]Creswell, *Research Design*.

[11]Creswell, *Research Design*.

[12] Flyybjerg, "Five Misunderstandings," 105.

[13] Creswell, *Research Design*.

[14] Anthony M. Orum, Joe R. Feagin, and Gideon Sjoberg, "Introduction: The Nature of the Case Study," *A Case for the Case Study* (1991): 1-26.

[15] Orum, Feagin, and Sjoberg, "Introduction."

Creswell concurred and helped researchers to understand the benefits of case study research.[16] He pointed out that case study research consists of investigating a case "within a real-life, contemporary context or setting."[17] Further, Creswell presented case study research as "a strategy of inquiry, a methodology, or a comprehensive research strategy."[18] He defined case study research as, "A type of design in qualitative research that may be an object of study, as well as a product of the inquiry."[19] He distinguishes case study research as:

> A qualitative approach which allows the researcher to explore a real-life, contemporary bounded system (a case) or multiple bounded systems (cases) over time, through detailed, in-depth data collection involving multiple sources of information (e.g. observations, interviewing, audiovisual material, and documents and reports) and reports a case description and case themes.[20]

Creswell and other scholars have provided sufficient clarity of the benefits of case study research. Thus, the researcher sought to employ descriptive qualitative comparative case study analysis as the selected methodology for the current thesis-project. Further, the researcher selected descriptive qualitative comparative case study analysis as it is an appropriate methodology and the best approach for investigating the critical phenomenon of staffing trends in African-American megachurches.

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[16] Creswell, *Research Design*.

[17] Creswell, *Research Design*, 97.

[18] Creswell, *Research Design*, 97.

[19] Creswell, *Research Design*, 97.

[20] Creswell, *Research Design*, 97.

Survey Design, Interviews and Observation

The survey for the project was designed based upon methodological research best practices. Creswell suggested that survey design is often the best way to get information and feedback used in planning and program improvement.[21] Flyberg added that through strategic design and implementation, a survey is a systematic process used in gathering information on a specific topic by asking questions of individuals and then generalizing the results to the groups represented by the respondents.[22] Therefore, survey was designed as the most accessible methodology for acquiring the requisite knowledge to gain a greater understanding of the topic at hand.

Creswell suggested that the development of the survey should take into consideration the following four critical questions guiding project design: (1) What is the goal? (2) What is the target population? (3) What is the timing? and, (4) What mode will be used?[23] The goal of the current thesis-project was to provide a platform for church leaders of African-American megachurches to share their experiences, perceptions, and observations. The ultimate goal was to gain an in-depth understanding of how church leaders understand, identify, and resolve the paramount and critical issue of staffing African-American megachurches. Thus, the target population was church leaders of African- American megachurches. The time frame for the collection of data was from six

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[21] Creswell, *Research Design*.

[22] Flyybjerg, "Five Misunderstandings."

[23] Creswell, *Research Design*.

to twelve months. The mode of collection was postal mail, electronic mail, and interviews.

During the survey design process, careful consideration was given to the issues of reliability and validity. As such, the survey questions were written so that, as much as possible, each question would mean the same thing to everyone, including those administering the survey. Additionally, a major consideration in the project design and refinement was the extent to which each survey question measured the idea and concept it was intended to measure. The survey questions were reviewed by colleagues and academic mentors.

The evaluation design was threefold. First, a survey, the "Staffing & the Mega-Church Questionnaire" was developed and administered to the church leaders.[24] The compressive survey was designed and used to generate data reflecting the utilization of volunteers, both full and part-time.

The Survey Instrument

The comprehensive survey was used to gather data reflecting the utilization of volunteers versus paid staff. Additional information was gathered from pastors, executive leadership teams, and community leaders. The survey instrument consisted of 25 questions directly or vicariously related to staffing. For example, Survey Question #2 was a direct inquiry about staffing, and it was designed to find out the total number of

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[24] See Appendix A.

staff members, the total number of full-time and part-time employed staff, and the total

number of volunteers. Whereas, Survey Question #4 was designed to ascertain if the

megachurch implemented any particular staffing model or employed specific staffing

styles. Additionally, Survey Question #11 was designed to determine how the part-time

and volunteer staff added value to the megachurch based upon the church's theological

foundation. Similarly, Survey Question #15 was designed to find out the organized

retention processes and strategies set in place at the church. In an effort to illuminate

staffing trends, Survey Question #23 was designed to find out historical staffing patterns

compared to present-day staffing patterns.

Ultimately, the goal of the survey was to ascertain church leaders' of African-

American megachurches understanding of critical issues in the African-American

megachurch. The survey provided a platform for seasoned megachurch leaders to add

to the discussion of a plethora of issues facing megachurches, to afford an opportunity

for realistic self-evaluation of the effectiveness of their leadership styles, ethics, and

practices, and to share information from their vantage points. The survey attempted to

collect data deemed the best practices employed by the participating church leaders of

African-American megachurches. The survey was designed for an African-American

megachurch with a minimum average attendance at a Sunday morning worship service

of two-thousand attendees.

Interview

Beyond the survey, additional information was gathered from interview

participants. Creswell pointed out that, "Typically, case study researchers study current,

real-life cases that are in progress so that they can gather accurate information not lost

by time."[25] He also shared that it is extremely important to select participants who will

be true, honest, sincere, and unthreatened by the interview.[26] The interview

participants for this case study were selected pastors, executive leadership team

members, and lay and community leaders alike who were "real-life" participants in the

African-American megachurch. Neither intimidation nor coercion was used in the

identification and selection of the participants.

Observation

In addition to the survey and the interviews, observations were conducted of

church leaders, members, full-time and part-time staffers, and volunteers at selected

African-American megachurches in order to provide an in-depth understanding of, and

an additional examination of, this phenomenon. Creswell pointed out the advantage

and benefit of observation, even within the parameters of an interview setting or

visitation, is that it allows a researcher to view the participant in the individual's familiar

environment—the African-American megachurch in the case.[27] Researchers must be

[25] Creswell, *Research Design*, 98.

[26] Creswell, *Research Design*, 98.

[27] Creswell, *Research Design*, 98.

concerned with an openness and a mutual relationship established between the research and the observed.

Further, the researcher sought to employ strict adherence to Weis' (1994) paradigm for establishing the integrity of the role of the researcher.[28] The implications for what may be found from the surveys, interviews, and observations very well may lend themselves to providing an in-depth understanding of the issue of African-American megachurches. Thus, respect, integrity, and confidentiality was maintained in this study. To protect the identity of the individual megachurches and the participants, pseudonyms were used to identify some churches and participants.

Summary

This thesis project examined the staffing patterns and trends of twenty African-American megachurches as it relates to paid versus volunteer staffing patterns. Additionally, interviews were conducted with selected pastors, executive leadership team members, and lay and community leaders. In this study, the researcher selected qualitative comparative case study analysis as the research model. The use of interviews, a questionnaire, and observations were critical in this process. The research design was selected in order to maximize efforts for an in-depth analysis of the critical phenomenon of staffing trends in the African-American megachurch. The methodology employed a twenty-five item questionnaire, a survey that was distributed to twenty

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[28] Weis, 1994, 65.

African-American megachurches in nine states. Additionally, interviews were conducted

using the survey instrument as a standardized open-ended interview with selected

pastors, executive leadership team members, and lay and community leaders. These

individuals were critically significant as they represented "real-life" participants in the

African-American megachurch.

Creswell points out that the data analysis approach selected for case studies may

vary. In some case studies, researchers will report on the entire case.[29] However, for

some case studies, the researcher will select multiple cases to analyze.[30] Also, Creswell

offers that, "Data should be analyzed through a description of the case and themes of

the case as well as through cross-case themes."[31] Likewise, the data analysis process

"allows the researcher to develop data analysis of one or more cases."[32] To that end,

the data analysis process for this case study examined the recurrent themes illuminated

from the survey, interviews, and observations. The next chapter uses descriptive coding

which allowed the researcher to summarize the themes, topics, and issues that were

illuminated.

Access to the participants (i.e. survey, interviews, and observation opportunities)

was based upon the Research and Human Subjects guidelines in accordance with

Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary. In that this case study was conducted primarily

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[29] Creswell, *Research Design*, 99.

[30] Creswell, *Research Design*, 99.

[31] Creswell, *Research Design*, 105.

[32] Creswell, *Research Design*, 105.

through survey, interviews, and observation, the researcher sought to establish all

research relationships as identified by Weis and employed Weis' recommendations as a

guideline for the study.[33] Weis offered the following five points on the researcher's role

that were achieved in this study:

1) The interviewer and the respondent will work together to produce information useful to the research project.
2) The interviewer will define the areas for exploration and will monitor the quality of the material. The respondents will provide observations, external and internal, accepting the interviewer's guidance regarding topics and the kind of report that is needed.
3) The interviewer will not ask questions out of idle curiosity. On the other hand, the interviewer will be a privileged inquirer on the sense that the interviewer may ask for information the respondent would not make generally available, maybe would not tell anyone at all.
4) The interviewer will respect the respondent's integrity. This means that the interviewer will not question the respondent's appraisals, choices, motives, right to observations, or personal worth.
5) The interviewer will ensure, that during the interviews and afterwards, that the respondent will not be damaged or disadvantaged because of the respondent's participation on the interview. In particular, the interviewer will treat the respondent's participation and communication as confidential information.[34]

Following Weis' paradigm afforded an appropriate negotiation of subjectivity and

established comfort levels between the participants and the researcher.

Velez summarizes key methodological assumptions and limitations of qualitative

research by pointing out that,

Qualitative researchers are not immune to significant assumptions. First, qualitative inquiry believes that reality is subjective and that social environments are personal constructs created by individual interpretations that are not generalizable; these beliefs are rooted in constructivism rather than positivism. Therefore, the assumption is that there is not a generalizable reality

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[33] Weis, 1994, 65.

[34] Weis, 1994, 65.

that is quantifiable for a larger population than an individual case. Qualitative researchers assume that rich description and a deep understanding are indicative of their methodology, which insinuates that other research paradigms are not deep.[35]

In this study, the researcher is clear that the phenomenon of staffing trends within African-American megachurches was investigated from the limited vantage point of twenty African-American megachurches, and that many more African-American megachurches exist in the United States and internationally. However, the implications for what was found from the surveys, interviews, and observations lent themselves to providing an in-depth understanding of the issue of staffing trends within African-American megachurches that may be useful for aspiring and developing megachurches.

In their abstract, Sinkovics, et al. provided a concise discussion of the matter of trustworthiness in qualitative research, saying that,

> Reliability, validity, generalizability and objectivity are fundamental concerns for quantitative researchers. For qualitative research, however, the role of the dimensions is blurred. Some researchers agree that these dimensions are not applicable to qualitative research and a qualitative researcher's tool chest should be geared towards trustworthiness encompassing issues such as credibility, dependability, transferability and conformability.[36]

As this thesis served as an exploratory study focused on the African-American megachurch, the researcher sought to employ strict adherence to Weis' (1994) paradigm for establishing the integrity of the role of the researcher.[37] Additionally,

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[35] Velez, "Evaluating Research Methods: Assumptions, Strengths, and Weaknesses of Three Educational Research Paradigms," (2009): Para. 3.

[36] Sinkovics, et al., "Enhancing the Trustworthiness of Qualitative Research in International Business," (2008): Para 1.

[37] Weis, 1994, 65.

having a clear understanding of the assumptions, limitations, and benefits of qualitative

research, in general, and in particular case study research, this study sought to lend

itself to achieving a high level of trustworthiness among peer researchers, institutions,

and among the national and international church community.

CHAPTER 5

RESEARCH FINDINGS

Introduction

Chapter Five provides the data presentation and analysis and summarizes the

results of the research project, *Exploring Management Issues in African American Mega-*

churches. The research was conducted as a hybrid study using mixed methods

research methodology that involved collecting, analyzing and integrating both

quantitative and qualitative research.

Issues of Anonymity

As indicated in Chapter Four, integrity, respect, and professionalism were

maintained throughout the research process. For example, the participating mega-

churches were informed of the protection through the use of pseudonyms. However,

unanimously, in the spirit of integrity and full disclosure, the megachurch leaders

desired to self-identify and to publically share their church identity and a wealth of the

church data as needed for the project. The theme of the church leaders was grounded in

their honesty and integrity of having nothing to hide. Furthermore, pastors and church

leaders were more concerned about sharing critical information and relevant insight

that may positively impact aspiring and developing megachurch leaders. Especially

important to the church leaders was the platform and opportunity to celebrate their

megachurch campuses and elevate their God granted successes. For example, Rev.

Blakely Scott, pastor of First Nazareth Baptist Church wrote: "The megachurch status

provides resources and support for the community by having facilities available for

meetings, space for food pantries and farmer's markets, allotted space for day care and

the Benevolence Committee for additional community outreach".[1] Likewise, Dr. Jesse T.

Williams, pastor of Convent Avenue Baptist Church, New York, NY stated that the

megachurch offered: "economic empowerment, benevolent assistance, community

organizing, social justice, and educational enhancement."[2]   Rev. Dr. Charles B. Jackson,

pastor of Brookland Baptist, West Columbia, SC explained:

> Our church remains focused on community service and provides ongoing
> financial support through our mission budget with major support to several
> colleges and universities. Support is also provided through one of several of our
> 501(c)(3) organizations established to meet the needs of the community and
> where roughly 80% of the support goes to persons who are not members of our
> church.[3]

As such, in the spirit of collegiality, to honor the participating church leaders' self-

identification preferences and in complete support of the participating megachurches, the

researcher elected to identify the megachurches in the current study by their actual identities.

Chapter Framework

The framework for the summary of findings included: (1) pertinent qualitative

data extracted from the survey and (2) a comprehensive case presentation of direct

responses as expressed by the participants. The primary goal of the study was to analyze

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[1] Blakely Scott, Interview with Researcher, Columbia, SC, May 29, 2013.

[2] Jesse T. Williams, Jr., Interview with Researcher, New York, SC, May 5, 2014.

[3] Charles B. Jackson, Sr., Interview with Researcher, West Columbia, SC, June 12, 2013.

information obtained from church leaders of African-American megachurches. The interviews were conducted employing the *Staffing & the Mega-Church Questionnaire.* Using the survey as a standardized open-ended interview model, the researcher interviewed selected pastors, executive leadership team members, and lay and community leaders. These individuals were significant as they were "real-life" participants in the African American megachurch. The purpose of the study was to examine the perceptions of church leaders from selected African-American megachurches who recognize the excessive, critical issues facing aspiring and developing African-American megachurches, particularly, the issue of staffing and organizational management. In order to adequately evaluate the facilitation, impact, and overall success of the ministry project, the project evaluation design was tri-fold. The primary methodology consisted of a survey instrument, *Staffing & the Megachurch Questionnaire*. Additionally, interviews with selected pastors and observation of events at selected mega- churches were conducted.

Summary of Findings

As a as a hybrid study using both quantitative and qualitative research methodology, the current research was primarily conducted through the use of a triangulated method. A comprehensive survey, direct interviews with megachurch leaders, and observations within the context of selected church events, activities and meetings were all considered to inform the present qualitative descriptive case study. However, the primary instrument used was the questionnaire. The questionnaire

afforded the researcher the opportunity to collect data and to gain perspectives on the

variable approaches to organizational management, especially in utilizing volunteers

versus paid staff in the participating megachurches. In addition to the information

collected from the questionnaire, both interviews and observations were used to gather

data from pastors regarding effective use of the executive leadership team, community

leaders, community partnerships and additional relevant topics informing the study.

The survey instrument consisted of 25 questions directly or vicariously related to

staffing.[4] The interviews were conducted with selected pastors. Twenty African

American mega-churches participated in the questionnaire.

Church Membership

Question #1 was designed to quantify the number of members registered on

each church's roster and to disaggregate the reported membership by participating

churches. The reported membership of the megachurches ranged from 2,000 to 15,000.

The mean total church membership was 4,387 (see Table 5-1). While all participating

churches maintained a record of church membership, Rev. Dr. Robert C. Scott, pastor of

Central Baptist Church, St. Louis, MO with over 2,000 members emphasized the

importance of maintaining accurate data annually. Dr. Scott stated: "We purge the rolls

every year" in order to assure the most accurate church membership count.[5]

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[4] See Appendix A.

[5] Robert Scott, Interview with Researcher, St. Louis, MO, May, 8, 2014.

Table 5-1. Membership of Participating Churches

Lowest Membership	Highest Membership	Mean
2,000	15,000	4,387

Seven churches or 36.8% reported the church membership between 2,000 and 2,999.

Four churches or 21% reported the church membership of 3,000 and less than 3,999. Four

churches or 21% reported the church membership between 4,000 and 6,999. Another two

churches or 10% reported a membership between 7,000 and less than 9,000 members. Finally,

two additional churches or 10% of the participating churches reported the membership

between 10,000 and 15,000 (see Table 5-2).

Table 5-2. Participating Church Membership by Percentage

Membership Range	Number of Churches	Percentage
2,000 to 2,999	7	36%
3,000 to 3,999	4	21%
4,000 to 6,999	4	21%
7,000 to 9,000	2	21%
10,000 to 15,000	2	21%

Note: One church did not report membership.

Church Staffing

Question #2 was designed to quantify the number and type of staff members

utilized in the participating churches and to report the staffing categories of

participating churches. Each of the twenty participating churches indicated that they

employed the combined use of full-time, part-time, and volunteer staff to work in the

ministry.

Table 5-3, Table 5-4 and Figures 5-1 and 5-2 provide a graphic presentation of

the church staffing results. The total number of both full-time equivalent (FTE) staff

members and part-time staff members ranged from 6 to 160. The mean for total staff

members was 38. The total number of full-time equivalent (FTE) staff members ranged

from 3 to 62. The mean for total FTE staff members was 16. The total number of part-

time staff members ranged from 1 to 128. The mean for total staff members was 19.

The total number of church volunteers ranged from 4 to 2,419. The mean for total

church volunteers was 261 (see Table 5-3).

Table 5-3. Total Mean of Church Staff

Total Staff	Full-Time	Part-time	Volunteers
38	16	19	261

Table 5- 4. Church Staff by Percentage

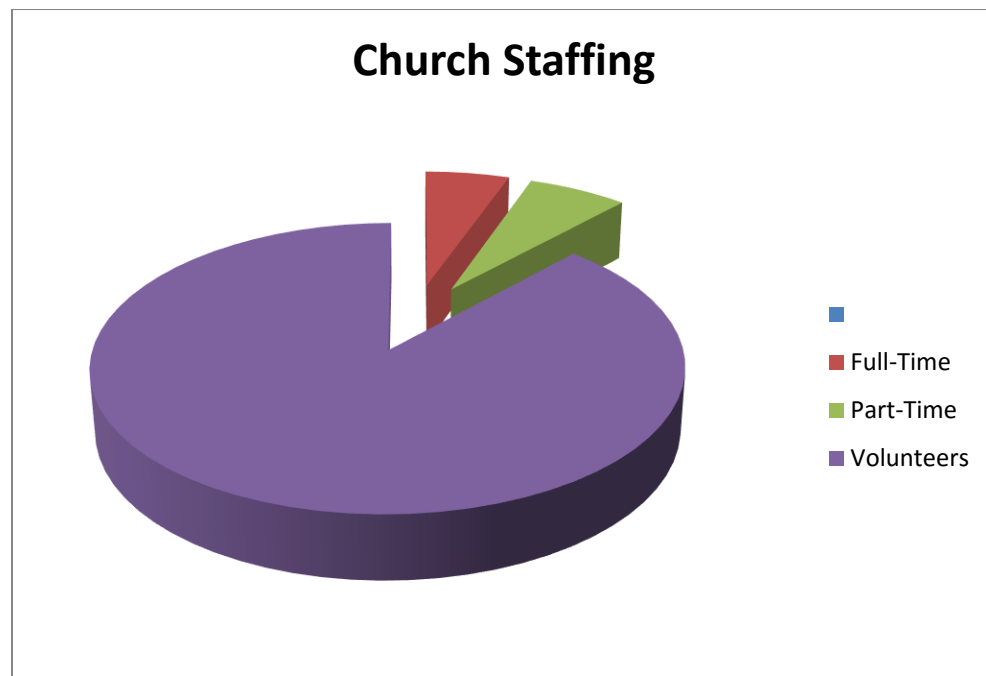| Full-Time Church Staffer s	Part-time Church Staffers	Volunteers
5.43%	6.4%	88%

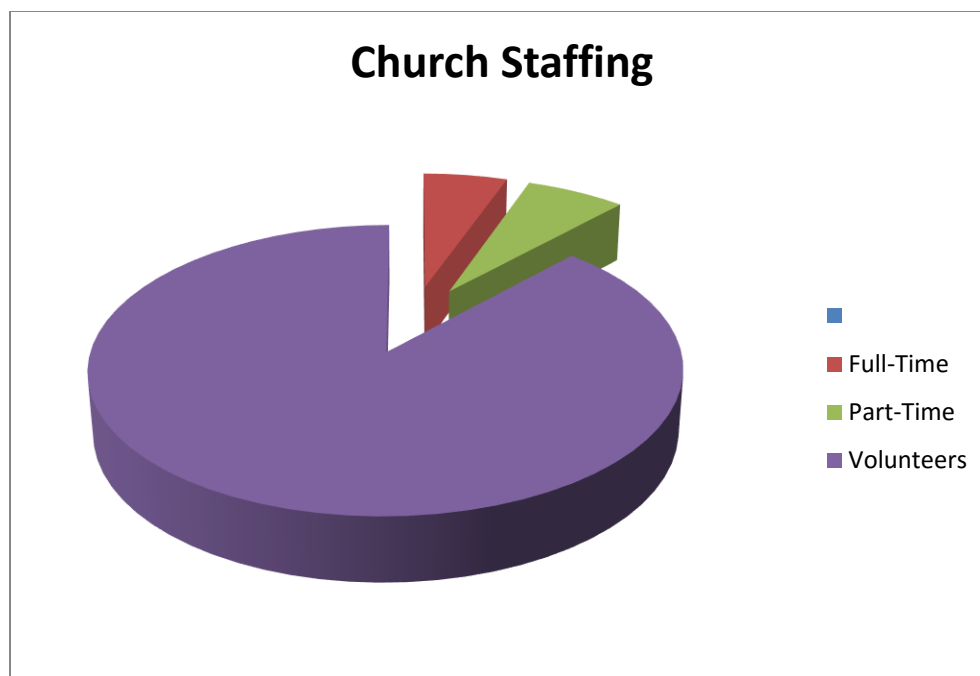*Figure 5-1. Church Staffing Pie Chart I*

Figure 5-2. Church Staffing Pie Chart II

As aforementioned, Church Staffing trends in African- American Mega Churches was the central focus for the current thesis project. The majority of the megachurches in this project design used a combination of paid, volunteer and part-time staff members to provide the support to effectively meet the needs of these growing and multi-facet diverse congregations. The direct quotations below were from eight interviews of the participating pastors who offered compelling rationale and significant justification for their current staffing trends.

Rev. Charles B. Jackson, Sr., is the pastor of Brookland Baptist Church in West Columbia, SC. The church has over 10,000 members and employs nearly 200 members with over 40 full-timers, 160 part-timers, and hundreds of volunteers. Dr. Jackson

provided the rationale and justification for the current staffing plan at Brookland

Baptist.

> We have paid staff, which manage, develop, and do hands-on work with community-service programs through the Brookland Foundation, Brookland Center for Economic Change, and Brookland West Columbia Housing and Development Corporation. We continue to encourage members to volunteer in giving reasonable service to kingdom building.[6]

 Included in the staffing arrangement, he stated: "The church rewards full and some

part-timers with housing allowance, pensions, health insurance, life and disability, paid

days off, child care and cafeteria benefits."[7]

Elder Darrell Jackson, Sr. is the senior pastor of Bible Way Church of Atlas Road in

Columbia, SC. The church membership is over 14,000 members and employs 105 staff

members, consisting of 62 full-timers, 43 part-timers, and over 500 volunteers. Elder

Jackson is also a senior South Carolina State Senator and the owner of Sunrise

Enterprise, Incorporated, the largest minority public relations firm in South Carolina.

Due to his active role in the State Senate, Elder Jackson has been heavily involved in the

economic development of the Lower Richland community where Bible Way Church of

Atlas Road in situated. As an asset to the community, Bible Way Church is one of the

largest employers of African Americans in the area with over a three-million dollar

payroll. The community was underdeveloped and located in an impoverished section of

Southeast Columbia. Elder Jackson stated: "In order for the church to be a beacon of

light in the community, the church must become an active participant in the

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[6] Charles Jackson, Interview with Researcher.

[7] Charles Jackson, Interview with Researcher.

transformation of the community."[8] Thus, the church, in addition to its free meal

programs that feed over 40,000 persons annually, operates community development

and enhancement programs that include: office and commercial space, health care

services, educational facilities, recreational space, and housing for residents in the

community. Elder Jackson noted: "It is very important for believers and places of faith to

make a difference in society; and, we think this is our contribution to really try to

improve the community."[9]

Rev. Dr. Sir Walter Mack serves as bishop and senior pastor of the Union Baptist

Church in Winston-Salem, NC. Union Baptist Church has over 4,000 members and within

the last five years, nearly 2,000 members have joined the church. Due to the explosive

growth, the need for increased staffing of part-timers and full-timers and the need for

increased volunteers has been critical to strengthen the growing ministry. Dr. Mack

stated,

> We really do not have a specific model for staffing in our church. We staff our
> church based on the needs of the congregation. We strategically try to hire
> members from within our church, rather than from the outside. This is contrary
> to the staffing patterns of many of our mega-churches today. It is our belief that
> the members we hire understand the vision and are dedicated to the overall
> ministry of the church.[10]

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[8] Darrel Jackson, Sr., Interview with Researcher, Columbia, SC, August 23,, 2013.

[9] Darrel Jackson, Interview with Researcher.

[10] Walter Mack, Interview with Researcher, Winston-Salem, NC, February 7, 2016.

Dr. Mack emphasized that church staffing should not be viewed as static or set based on historical realities, but must be approached as dynamic and constantly changing based on the developing needs of the church.

Rev. Blakely Scott is the pastor of First Nazareth Baptist Church in Columbia, SC with a membership of over 6,000 members. The church has 15 full-time employees with the majority of them employed in the church's day care facility. Rev. Scott explained,

> The ministry of the church is staffed through church leaders and volunteers. We have nearly 100 deacons and trustees who assist the pastor in the administration and the support of the overall ministry. These leaders faithfully serve over 50 ministries of the church on a volunteer basis. Because of this, we are able to significantly reduce our personnel costs and free up more money to support and maintain our various ministry programs.[11]

Rev. Scott emphasized that the reliance on volunteer staff was critical and afforded the church's staffing plan to operate effectively and economically.

Rev. Marvin Wiley is pastor of Rock of Ages Church in Maywood, IL where the church membership is over 3,000 members. The membership consists of over 18 full-timers, 4 part-timers, and hundreds of volunteers. Pastor Wiley offered,

> The use of volunteers is critical to the church overall staffing philosophy. Due to the escalating costs of health care, child care and retirement benefits, the church uses a lot of volunteers and part-timers to accommodate the needs of a growing congregation. Due to several mortgages that the church is supporting and other financial responsibilities, the allocation of church finances can be somewhat challenging. Volunteers and part-timers help the church balance this gap in allocating our financial resources. [12]

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[11] Blakely, Interview with Researcher.

[12] Marvin Wiley, Interview with Researcher, Maywood, IL, October 20, 2015.

Similarly to other participating pastors, Rev. Wiley also shared that the philosophy and

staffing trend of Rock of Ages stressed volunteer staffing and pointed out a major

problem unique to his congregation. Pastor Wiley offered, "Because of the inclement

weather in Chicago, there are some Sundays that church services are canceled and this

adds on additional strain on the resources of the church".[13]

Beulah Grove Baptist Church in Augusta, GA has a membership of over 6,000

members. Dr. Sam Davis is the senior pastor. The church staff consists of 100 staff

members, 40 full-timers, 60 part-timers, and 2500 volunteers. According to Dr. Davis,

"Paid staff and volunteers work hand-in-hand and side-by-side."[14] Dr. Davis emphasized

the need to demonstrate complete parity among paid and volunteer staff. He offered:

> Volunteers are kept informed just like paid staff. This makes volunteers feel
> vested and both [volunteers and paid staffers] work together to meet the
> established outlined goals. Part-time and volunteer staff are placed in ministries
> based on their gifts and not just because a need is there. Volunteer staff
> members follow the same process as all paid staff members, for example, going
> through the human resource department. They are also nurtured through the
> same programs as the full-time staff: incentive programs, staff and volunteer
> appreciations, professional development, work life balance, health and safe
> environments, and other staff recognition programs. We have over 2500
> volunteers to help support the various ministry programs in our community.[15]

Due to the significant impact of volunteer staff, Dr. Davis explained the staffing

approach for Beulah Grove Baptist was to elevate volunteers and treat them as paid

staff in regards to training, development, accountability, and celebration.

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[13] Wiley, Interview with Researcher.

[14] Sam Davis, Interview with Researcher, Augusta, GA, September 11, 2013.

[15] Davis, Interview with Researcher.

Dr. Alyn Waller serves as the senior pastor of Enon Tabernacle Baptist Church in Philadelphia, PA with a church membership of over 15,000 members. The staff consists of 52 staff members: 23 full-timers, 29 part-timers, and 1000 volunteers. The church has worship services in multiple locations, thus highlighting the concept of multiple staffing. According to Dr. Waller, the staffing model for the Enon Tabernacle is "purpose driven".[16] Dr. Waller stated, "Due to our multiple locations, we do a lot of cross training and clarity in communications."[17] The church tithes back into the community and has a strong partnership with the community. Dr. Waller explained,

> There must be a clear understanding of the vision of the church and the core theological values of the church by all staff member of the church. We must have a clear and concise job description for all staff, including part-time and volunteers. Accountability and expectations are not dismissed because of part-time or volunteer status.[18]

Dr. Waller was convinced that effective organizational management and attention to detail results in an effectively executed staffing plan.

Pastor Gregory Moss is the pastor, teacher, and leader of St. Paul Baptist Church in Charlotte, NC with a membership of over 5,000 members. The St. Paul staff includes: six full-timers, 14 part-timers, and hundreds of volunteers. The church has a strong relationship with the community. The church allows the community access to its facilities, free counseling, home repairs for the elderly, sporting programs for the youth, community forums on relevant issues, and general benevolence for the community. The

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[16] Alyn Waller, Interview with Researcher, Philadelphia, PA, November 3. 2015.

[17] Waller, Interview with Researcher.

[18] Waller, Interview with Researcher.

church is mission-minded as Pastor Moss served as president of the Lott Carrey Mission

Conference. Pastor Moss acknowledged,

> We are sorely under-staffed mainly because of financial restraints; yet, we have not had to lay-off any staff. We have developed and utilized a bureau of volunteers effectively. We add part-time and volunteer staff according to need and then train and cross-train them. It is expected of all of our staff to be punctual, loyal, have the willingness to go above and beyond one's job requirement, and have the ability to interact with fellow disciples with courtesy and respect.[19]

In regards to the critical mass of support needed to operate the megachurch, as

aforementioned, one hundred percent of the participating churches indicated that they

utilized a mixed staffing and organizational design to include full-time staff members,

part-time staff members, and volunteers. The data revealed that 5.4% of church staff

support was yielded from full-time, paid staff members. An additional 6.4% of the

church staff support was yielded from part-time, paid staff members. However, 88% of

the church staff support was yielded from unpaid volunteers. A significant notation was

that one megachurch, Beulah Grove Baptist Church reported having 2,419 volunteers to

assist in the operations of the church, while other churches reported from four to 1,000.

Thus, 88% was skewed based on the tremendous volunteer success of one church, but

truly representative of the churches as a whole.

Unanimously, church leaders reported that they offered a variety of employment

compensation packages with varying full benefits. As reported, typically, the church

pastor, selected senior officials, and selected church leaders were eligible for the

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[19] Gregory Moss, Interview with Researcher, Charlotte, NC, July 11, 2013.

church's employee compensation package. For example, Royal Missionary Baptist

Church, North Charleston, SC offered "pension insurance, health insurance, life and

disability coverage, and paid holidays." [20] Also typically, only full-time staff members

were eligible for employment compensation; part-time staff members were not eligible

for employment compensation packets. Ebenezer Baptist Church, for example, stated:

"Full-time=Health insurance and retirement; Part-time = No benefits."[21] Employee

compensation packages included a variable combination of the following benefits:

salary, housing allowance, child care allowance, retirement/pension, health insurance,

dental insurance, cancer insurance, short-term disability, long-term disability, and

holiday pay. Not all churches offered all benefits in the church's employment

compensation package. For example, most churches did not offer cancer insurance or

an allowance for child care. However, Jehovah Missionary Baptist Church indicated that

the church offered "health insurance, dental insurance, 403B retirement, cancer

insurance, life insurance, and housing allowance for pastors." [22]

The results also revealed that the mean percentage of the church budget

allocated for staff salaries, benefits, and pastoral support was 46.44. The percentages

allocated for staff employment compensation packages ranged from 33.3% to 90%.

Three churches did not report on this data point. The churches were listed based on

lowest to highest church membership and included percentage of paid staff and ratio of

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[20] Issac J. Holt, Interview with Researcher, North Charleston, SC, April 4, 2014.

[21] Leonzo Lynch, Interview with Researcher, Charlotte, NC, March 13, 2014.

[22] Marion Newton, Interview with Researcher, Sumter, SC, February 2, 2014.

paid staff compared to congregation size (see Table 5-5). Paid staffers compared to the

congregation size ranged from 0.2% to 1.9%. That is, less than 2% of the congregation

represented compensated staff. Additionally, in an effort to provide a clear relationship

between congregational size and staffing, three graphs have been provided via

illustrations in Figures 5-3, 5-4, and 5-5 of the three churches. The three selected

churches represent low, medium, and high church membership of the participating

churches in the current study. The graphs illustrated the paramount focus that

regardless of the size of the megachurch, a disproportionate number and critical cadre

of volunteers existed to assist in the operations, management, and performance of

church duties. The graphics also revealed that of the entire church membership a

disproportionate amount of the church's operations, management, and performance of

church duties is completed by a relatively small group of full-time, part-time, and

volunteer church affiliates compared to the full church membership.

Table 5-5. Staffing Organization of Participating Churches (Percentage of Paid Staff & Ratio of Paid Staff to Congregation Size)

Church listed from lowest to highest Enrollment	Church Enrollment	Full-Time Staff	Part-time Staff	Volunteers	Percentage of Paid Staff to Congregation Size	Ratio of Paid Staff to Congregation Size
Zion Canaan Baptist Church, Inc. Columbia SC	2,000	8	1	50	0.4%	9:2000
Journey Baptist Church Columbia SC	2,000	3	3	19	0.3%	3:1000
Central Baptist Church Columbia SC	2,000	7	3	100	0.5%	1:200

Mt. Zion Missionary Baptist Church of Cayce Cayce SC	2,000	10	20	50	1.5%	3:200
Jehovah Missionary Baptist Church Sumter SC	2,152	9	10	100	0.8%	19:2152
Central Baptist Church St. Louis MO	2,173	18	23	75	1.8%	1:53
Temple of Praise Irmo, SC	2,600	12	14	10	1%	1:100
Convent Avenue Baptist Church New York NY	3,000	40	8	45	1.6%	2:125
Ebenezer Baptist Church Charlotte NC	3,000	5	15	4	0.6%	1:150
Rock of Ages Maywood IL	3,000	18	4	300	0.7%	11:1500
Royal Missionary Baptist Church North Charleston SC	3,200	4	3	24	0.2%	7:3200
Union Baptist Church Winston-Salem NC	4,000	7	5	100	0.3%	3:1000
St. Paul Baptist Church Charlotte NC	5,000+	6	14	15+	0.4%	1:250
Beulah Grove	5,800	31	40	2,419	1.2%	71:5800

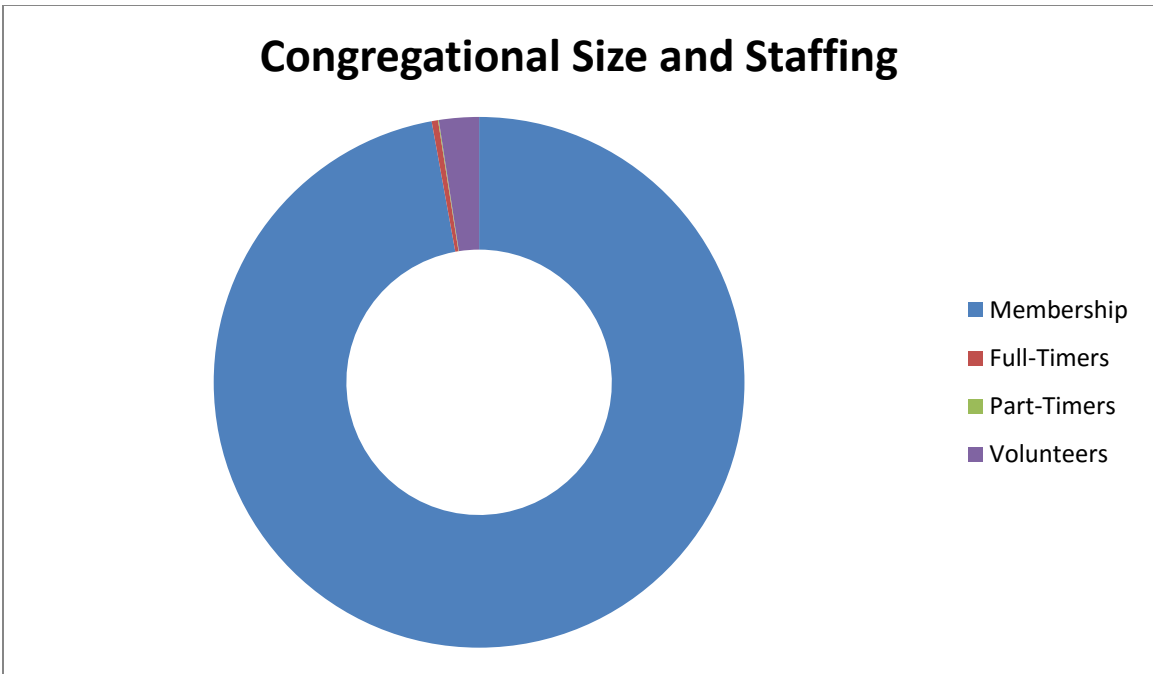|						
Missionary Baptist Church Augusta GA						
First Nazareth Baptist Church Columbia SC	6,000	15	5	15	0.3%	1:100
Union Baptist Durham NC	7,000	8	12	10	0.2%	1:350
Brookland Baptist Church Columbia SC	8,075	32	128	300	1.9%	32:1615
Bible Way Church of Atlas Road Columbia SC	13,360	62	40	500+	0.7%	13:1670
Enon Tabernacle Baptist Church Philadelphia PA	15,000	23	29	1,000	0.3%	13:3750
First Baptist Warner Robins GA	Data Not Provided	25	18	100	Unable to Calculate	Unable to Calculate

Figure 5-3. Congregational Size and Staffing: Zion Canaan Baptist Church, Columbia, SC
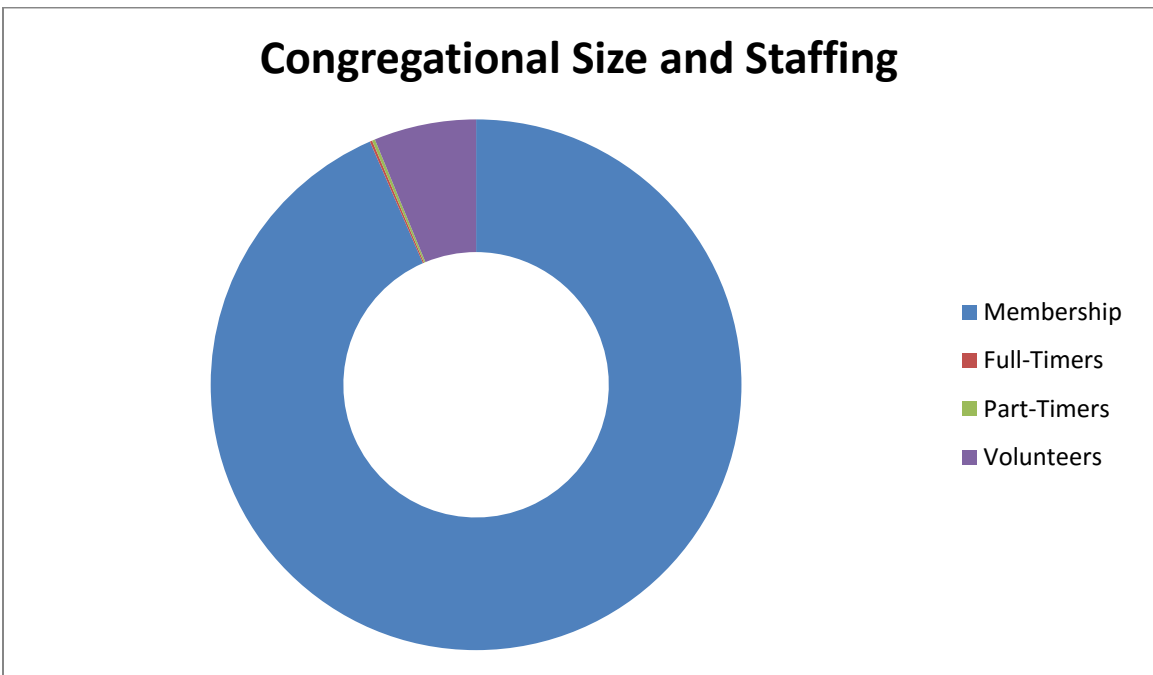

Figure 5-4. Congregational Size and Staffing: Rock of Ages Baptist Church, Maywood, IL
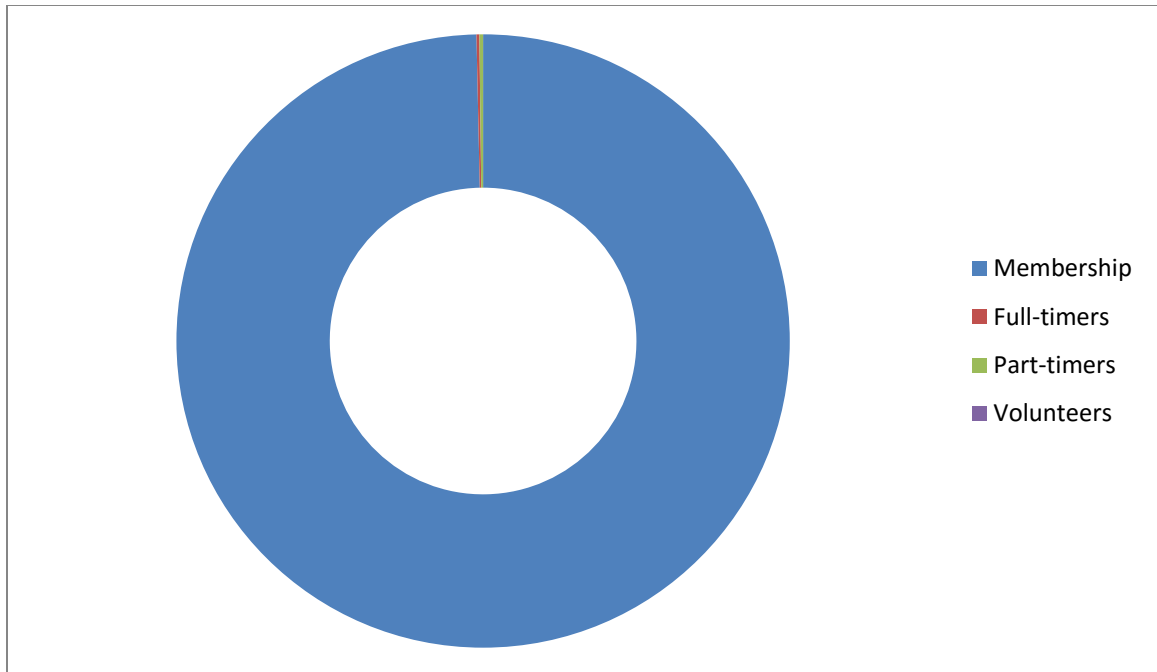
Figure 5-5. Congregational Size and Staffing: Enon Tabernacle Baptist Church, Philadelphia, PA

Common Themes

Questions #3 through #25 were designed to ascertain church leaders' understanding of critical issues in the African-American megachurch.[23] The questions were designed to provide a platform for seasoned megachurch leaders to add to the discussion of the various issues facing megachurches. The intent was to afford pastors and church leaders an opportunity for realistic self-evaluation of the effectiveness of their leadership styles, ethics, and practices. Also, the megachurch leaders would be able to share information from their vantage points and to serve as a critical data point in the data collection process for the research project.

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[23] See Appendix A.

As identified in Chapter Five, the current research study presented the most compelling data which was identified as Common Themes. The isolated common themes were deemed to be the best practices employed and best advice offered by the participating church leaders of the participating African-American megachurches. The four isolated common themes illuminated from the research project and the most compelling based on the questionnaire responses, from the interviews of selected church leaders, and through observations of special church events and meetings were the following: Celebrating Church Volunteers, Implementation of Staffing Model, Development of a Succession Plan, and Cultivation of Vision and Mission.

Celebrating Church Volunteers

God is not unjust; he will not forget your work and the love you have shown him as you have helped his people and continue to help them.[24]

The research findings of this present study revealed that 88% of the church's operations was conducted by unpaid volunteers (see Table 5-4). As aforementioned in the Church Staffing reporting, one megachurch, Beulah Grove Baptist Church reported having 2,419 volunteers to assist in the operations of the church, while other churches reported from four to 1,000. Thus, 88% was skewed based on the tremendous volunteer success of one church, but truly representative of the churches as a whole. Importantly, church leaders reiterated the importance of volunteers in the staffing and organizational plan to accommodate the ensuing growth and development of the megachurch. As a

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[24] Hebrews 6:10.

major theme identified among the pastors, the following were the paramount issues related to the necessity of cultivating church volunteerism: challenges of budget restraint, declining church membership, retirement benefits, and rising health benefits for eligible staff members.

Rev. Josh Kirvin, Sr., pastor of First Baptist Church in Warner Robins, GA stated, "Staff persons are interviewed prior to hiring. Volunteers are observed and scrutinized prior to being asked to serve".[25] Rev. Rickie G. Glenn, pastor of Mt. Zion Missionary Baptist Church of Cayce shared,

> A staffing contingency plan is something we are looking at as we contemplate opening up a new campus in another geographical location. Contingency staffing is commonly used in special situations to provide more time for completing a project and to provide what is needed with respect to permanent employees.[26]

The relationship between paid staff and volunteers was deemed critical in order to foster a good working environment. The findings indicated that in many instances paid staff and volunteers worked hand-in-hand and side-by-side. As aforementioned, Dr. Sam Davis, pastor of Beulah Grove Baptist Church, Augusta, GA emphasized the need to demonstrate complete parity among paid and volunteer staff. He offered: "Volunteers are kept informed just like paid staff. This makes volunteers feel vested and both [volunteers and paid staffers] work together to meet the established outlined goals."[27] According to Dr. Davis and others, church volunteers were kept informed about the

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[25] Josh B. Kirvin, Sr., Interview with Researcher, Warner Robins, GA, August 10, 2014.

[26] Rickie G. Glenn, Interview with Researcher, Cayce, SC, May 6, 2014.

[27] Sam Davis, Interview with Researcher, Augusta, GA, September 11, 2013.

critical issues with the church just like the paid staffers. Pastors admonished that the church leadership must be diligent in differentiating assigned tasks to both paid and volunteer staff. In some instances, volunteers were included in staff meetings and planning sessions to promote cohesiveness in assigned tasks, job-related activities, volunteer appreciation events, and recognition to help build and promote camaraderie and to promote the team concept. Dr. Lynch informed that part-time and volunteer staffing plans must place an "emphasis on team building."[28] However, the time commitment for a volunteer for a particular task may be a great task and deemed unreasonable for a volunteer assignment. Therefore, it is imperative to assess the assignment or task and to ascertain if the expectation of required time, effort, and ability is appropriate for volunteers. Additionally, pastors indicated that the mutual and collegial approach between paid staffers and volunteers made the volunteers feel vested and appreciated, while both work together to meet the established, outlined goals and ultimately to assist in advancing the mission of the church.

Further, pastors pointed out that volunteers and part-time staffers were placed in ministry positions based on their spiritual gifts and not merely because of a need to fill a vacant role or need in the church. The pastors helped us to understand that every child of God is filled with the power of the Holy Spirit, thus specially and spiritually gifted to play a unique and valued role in the body of Christ. No one is without gift or purpose. However, spiritual gifts are not our talents or skills. They are the grace of God at work

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[28] Lynch, Interview with Researcher.

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within us, empowering us to match our deep passions with the world's deep need. The gifts are given to individuals, but they are given to build and strengthen community and to meet the needs of those around us.

Rev. Kenneth R. Hammond, pastor of Union Baptist Church, Durham, NC offered, "Staffing is dictated by vision, need, and availability." [29] Dr. Davis agreed and stated, "Part-time and volunteer staff are placed in ministries based on their gifts and not just because a need is there".[30] Rev. Gregory Moss added: "Part-time and volunteer staff are added according to need then trained and cross-trained. Each person is asked to embrace the idea that all are gifted for a certain task".[31]

In some churches, both non-paid and part-time staffers were expected to follow the same Human Resource clearance process as paid staffers. Additionally, non-paid and part-time staffers were nurtured through the same staff development, mentorship, and leadership programs as the full-time paid staff. Volunteers, non-paid staff, and part-time staff were encouraged to give reasonable service, including tithe and offering of personal gifts to advance kingdom building. Dr. Davis offered:

> Volunteer staff members follow the same process as all paid staff members, for example, going through the human resource department. They are also nurtured through the same programs as the full-time staff: incentive programs, staff and volunteer appreciations, professional development, work life balance, health and safe environments, and other staff recognition programs. We have over 2500 volunteers to help support the various ministry programs in our community.[32]

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[29] Kenneth R. Hammond, Interview with Researcher, May 8, 2014.

[30] Davis, Interview with Researcher.

[31] Moss, Interview with Researcher.

[32] Davis, Interview with Researcher.

Implementation of Staffing Model

For the Scripture says, "You shall not muzzle an ox when it treads out the grain," and, "The laborer deserves his wages (1Timothy 5:18).[33]

As aforementioned, the research findings of this present study revealed that less than 15% of the church's operations were fully conducted by full-time or part-time, paid staff members (see Table 5-4 and Figures 5-3, 5-4, and 5-5). In fact, the data findings revealed that of the participating megachurches 14.9%, with 6.3% of full-time staffers and 8.6% of part-time staffers, held paid positions (see Table 5-4 and Figures 5-3, 5-4, and 5-5). In regards to the Implementation of Staffing Models and Styles, based on the findings of present study, the data revealed that participating churches viewed implementation of staffing models and styles as a mixed-priority for the church (see Table 5-6). Overwhelmingly, 13 churches or 65% of the participating megachurches indicated that they operated without the benefit of a structured or formalized Staffing Model. Thus, seven megachurches or 35% of the participating megachurches indicated that they operated based on a Staffing Model (see Table 5-6).

Of the churches reporting to have implemented a Staffing Plan, the models were variable. The Staffing Models reported ranged from the following levels of development: (1) External Employment Agency, (2) Personnel Committee, (3) Leadership Team Consensus, (4) Purpose-Driven Model, and (5) Spiritual Gifts Assessment.

Dr. Jackson, pastor of Brookland Baptist, West Columbia, South Carolina stated,

While we do not use a formal staffing model/style, we periodically review certain job types to help manage and monitor performance as well as to assess

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[33] 1 Timothy 5:18.

efficiency, training, and staffing needs. This is done by collecting data on hours spent on difference tasks and utilizing project grids to assign and monitor work completion.[34]

Rev. Moss informed that the staffing model implemented at St. Paul Baptist Church in Charlotte, NC was anchored in all staff serving as assistants to the pastor.[35] Similarly, Journey Baptist of Columbia, SC indicated that each person was given a Spiritual Gifts Assessment Inventory and matched with the corresponding ministry accordingly.[36] Additionally, Rev. Newton offered that Jehovah Missionary Baptist Church, Sumter, SC used an outside agency as the staffing model.[37]

Table 5-6. Implementation of Staffing Models by Participating Churches and Percentage

Churches with Staffing Plan		Churches without Staffing Plan	
7	35%	13	65%

The general consensus of the pastors responding to Staffing Models was clear. That is, unanimously, pastors believed that all staffing must be based on spiritual gifts and individual direction God has presented to potential candidates. Further, the staff member must be willing to advance the mission and goals of the church in accordance to God's will.

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[34] Charles Jackson, Interview with Researcher.

[35] Moss, Interview with Researcher.

[36] George Ashford, Interview with Researcher, June 12, 2014.

[37] Newton, Interview with Researcher.

Development of a Succession Plan

The LORD said to Moses, "Go up this mountain of the Abarim range, and see the land that I have given to the Israelites. When you have seen it, you also shall be gathered to your people, as your brother Aaron was, because you rebelled against my word in the wilderness of Zin when the congregation quarreled with me. You did not show my holiness before their eyes at the waters." (These are the waters of Meribath-kadesh in the wilderness of Zin.) Moses spoke to the LORD, saying, "Let the LORD, the God of the spirits of all flesh, appoint someone over the congregation who shall go out before them and come in before them, who shall lead them out and bring them in, so that the congregation of the LORD may not be like sheep without a shepherd."[38]

In regards to Succession Planning and Management, based on the findings of present study, the data revealed that participating churches viewed Succession Planning as a relatively low priority for the church (see Table 5-7). In fact, exactly 50% or ten of the participating churches utilized a developed succession planning and management model. Two churches or 10% of the participating churches indicated that they were involved in the beginning stages of developing a Succession Plan. One church indicated that the Succession Plan was under development and in progress. While, one church indicated that the church leadership had engaged in discussions of Succession Planning. Forty percent to the megachurches reported that they did not have a Succession Plan. Of the churches reporting to have implemented a succession plan, the models were variable and ranged from the following levels of development: (1) a succession plan incorporated within the church's Constitution and By-laws, (2) term limits of church leaders, (3) rotation of church leaders, (4) mentorship programs to groom future leaders, (5) leaders' assistants program, whereby the assistant replaces the leader, and

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[38] Numbers 27: 12-17.

(6) termination of services plan to include Emeritus status. Rev. Blakely, First Nazareth

Baptist Church indicated that "the church's Constitutions & By-Laws stipulate the

process of succession."[39] St Paul indicated that the church operates under a rotation

model.[40] Beulah Grove Missionary Baptist, Journey Baptist, and Mt. Missionary Baptist

Church of Cayce SC had similar philosophies for succession planning. Beulah Grove

Missionary Baptist pointed out that "there is a succession plan for the pastor and the

rest of the key church leaders have ministry descriptions that outline what they should

be doing in the ministry position.[41] Journey Baptist indicated that each leader has an

assistant who is being groomed as a successor.[42] Rev. Rickie Glenn of Mt. Missionary

Baptist Church of Cayce, SC stated, "We have an Executive Ministry Assistant. He takes

over in the absence of the pastor and oversees a majority of the church's ministries."[43]

Additionally, Brookland Baptist and Central Baptist offered similar succession plans for

the church deacons. Rev. Scott of Central Baptist stated: "For the deacons, we bring on

new deacons as needed. For all other officers, they can serve a maximum of three

consecutive years."[44] Rev. Jackson of Brookland Baptist stated: "We do not have a

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[39] Scott, Interview with Researcher.

[40] Moss, Interview with Researcher.

[41] Davis, Interview with Researcher.

[42] Ashford, Interview with Researcher.

[43] Glenn, Interview with Researcher.

[44] Scott, Interview with Researcher.

written succession. However, we are targeting new deacons under the age of 40 to

replace those older than 65 that are trending toward emeritus status.[45]

Table 5-7. Succession Planning and Management by Participating Churches and Percentage

Churches with Succession Plan		Churches with Developing Succession Plan		Churches without Succession Plan	
10	50%	2	10%	8	40%

Half of the participating churches indicated that they operated within the

guidelines of a Succession Plan. Consequently, the study presumed that only half of the

participating churches understood or viewed as a priority that replacement continuity

and leadership development are both critically essential for the organizational process

to work effectively. Some of the pastors pointed out that Succession Planning and

management of megachurches were critical needs-effective processes for training,

replacement, and succession in order to survive and to avoid being left "like a sheep

without a shepherd."[46] The pastors helped us to understand that Succession Planning

and Management are paramount in the assurance for the long-term viability of an

organization.

Cultivation of Vision and Mission

> But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and [be] ready always to [give] an
> answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with
> meekness and fear.[47]

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[45] Charles Jackson, Interview with Researcher Personal Interview.

[46] Numbers 27: 17.

[47] 1 Peter 3:15.

The research findings revealed variation of the megachurches from church membership size to utilization of organizational programs and theories. That is, some megachurches reported that they were adamant about following strict, structured guidelines, policies, and practices. Other megachurches were less strict about many policies and practices in relationship to the overall structure and operation of the church. On the issue of cultivation and development of the church's vision and mission, the research findings revealed the unanimous and paramount concern for all participating churches. The pervasive appreciation for the vision and mission was felt by each of the megachurches as evidenced in the presentation of the vision or mission statements from participating megachurches. When asked what is the vision and mission undergirding the organizational value system of the megachurch, responses included the statements provided in Table 5-8:

Table 5-8. *Vision or Mission Statement of Participating Churches*

Participating Megachurch	Vision or Mission Statement
Zion Canaan Baptist Church, Inc. **Columbia SC**	*To evangelize the unsaved and make disciples*
Journey Baptist Church **Columbia SC**	*See the need; Fill the need.*
Central Baptist Church **Columbia SC**	*To make Disciples for Jesus Christ through Equipping, Encouraging, and Empowering*
Mt. Zion Missionary Baptist Church of Cayce **Cayce SC**	*Making A Difference Where is Counts, In the Lives of People*
Jehovah Missionary Baptist Church **Sumter SC**	*Exalt the Savior, Evangelize the lost, Execute mission, Edify the Saints*
Central Baptist Church **St. Louis MO**	*Making Disciples…Transforming Lives*
Temple of Praise **Irmo, SC**	*Evangelize local community and build through youth*
Convent Avenue Baptist Church **New York NY**	*We are changed people, Changing the Community and the World for Jesus Christ*
Ebenezer Baptist Church	*Building the Family of God, One Soul at a Time*

Charlotte NC	
Rock of Ages **Maywood, IL**	*Masses, with the Mercy of the Maker*
Royal Missionary Baptist Church **North Charleston SC**	*A Growing Church fort Growing Christians*
Union Baptist Church **Winston-Salem NC**	*Our Vision is to develop a Community-based outreach ministry that reaches the heart of God's people, locally and globally.*
St. Paul Baptist Church **Charlotte NC**	*We exist to convince the unconvinced to be convinced and make disciples*
Beulah Grove Missionary Baptist Church **Augusta GA**	*From the Cradle to the Grave:* *Seek, Save, Support, Shape Serve*
First Nazareth Baptist Church **Columbia SC**	*The purpose of this Church shall be to foster and maintain public worship, to carry out the Great Commission of Jesus Christ….*
Union Baptist **Durham NC**	*Excellence without exception, Quality without question committed to the cause of Christ*
Brookland Baptist Church **Columbia SC**	*To proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ through evangelism, education, and economic empowerment*
Bible Way Church of Atlas Road **Columbia SC**	*To know God, to love, and to serve*
Enon Tabernacle Baptist Church **Philadelphia PA**	*A Place Where People Encounter God*
First Baptist **Warner Robins GA**	*Providing opportunities to reach more people for Christ*

Reinforcing the Vision and Mission through Church Logos

In addition to the churches having a biblically anchored vision and mission

statement, the churches also established strategic symbols primarily represented

through the official church logo. The official church local established and reinforced the

organizational branding of the megachurches. Church leaders were clear that a strong

brand not only helps to position an organization at a desired level in their service area,

but it can also move church members and the community-at-large to action. Branding

helps develop a visual trust and, in turn, loyalty, allowing megachurches to create

sustainable relationships with their church and community constituents. Branding through the official logo, the vision, and the mission was a most important tool at the control of the megachurches to build confidence in their organization from within. Most importantly, branding helped the megachurches clarify what they stand for and, in turn, helped them communicate their Christian position to their audiences in a way that resonated with them.

Figures 5-3 through 5-5 present the official church logos of three of the participating megachurches: Brookland Baptist Church, West Columbia SC, Convent Avenue Baptist Church, New York, NY, and Ebenezer Baptist Church, Charlotte, NC. The randomly selected churches represent the critical need for churches to reinforce the vision, mission and faith and to establish brand control through a corresponding logo.

Figure 5-3. Church Logo of Brookland Baptist Church, West Columbia SC
[Source: http://www.brooklandbaptist.org/]

Figure 5-4. Church Logo of Convent Avenue Baptist Church, New York, NY
 [Source: https://www.conventchurch.org/index.php]

Figure 5-5. Church Logo of Ebenezer Baptist Church, Charlotte NC
 [Source: http://www.ebccharlotte.org/]

Overwhelmingly, the pastors revealed the unwavering sentiment that as believers, that Christians are called to actively spread God's words. And, that God's word should be spread by living examples of church affiliates in the hope of inspiring and encouraging others. Christians should love to make a positive difference in the world, whether it be our loved ones, our enemies, or strangers from other cultures and other countries.

Summary

Chapter Five presented the data and analysis and summarized the results of the research. The overall significance and rationale for the present thesis was to explore the

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management and leadership issues in African American megachurches. Thus, this thesis-project sought to yield a comprehensive, practical recommendations for churches to use to guide and assist in preparing the expanding staffing needs in a growing congregation. Third, the research sought to provide a vital tool for pastors who struggle with the implementation and integration of multiple and specialized staff members that include part-time and full-time paid staff who labor alongside volunteer staff in church ministry positions.

The goal of the project was to provide a platform for church leaders of African-American megachurches to share their experiences, perceptions, and observations. The ultimate goal was to gain an in-depth understanding of how pastors, church officials, and church leadership team members understand, identify, and resolve the most pressing and critical issue of staffing African-American megachurches. Thus, the target population was church leaders of Africa- American megachurches.

The research findings presented the principal and recurring themes that were illuminated via the 25-item questionnaire and through the rich, in-depth discussions between the researcher from interviews with selected megachurch pastors and church leaders and through observations at megachurch services, meetings, activities, and events. In addition to the existing literature on African-American megachurches whose focus has been on historical, religious, political, and ecclesiastical development of the African-American megachurch, the current study expanded the discourse to include organizational and operational management with a focus on staffing. Significant to the presentation of Church Membership and Church Staffing trends, the study identified

four isolated common themes that were prominently illuminated from the participating

pastors and church leaders. The four isolated common themes illuminated from the

research project and the most compelling based on the questionnaire responses, from

the interviews of selected church leaders, and through observations of special church

events and meetings were the following: Celebrating Church Volunteers,

Implementation of Staffing Model, Development of a Succession Plan, and Cultivation of

Vision and Mission. Chapter Six will provide an overview of the completed research, the

discussion and evaluation of the main issues and observations identified in the study, an

extended conversation of the common themes, and a discussion of the implications for

practice with recommendations for further research.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

Chapter Six presented an overview of the completed research project, *Staffing Trends in African American Megachurches.* The chapter included a discussion and evaluation of the main issues and observations identified in the study and provided an extended conversation of the common themes. Additionally, a discussion of the Implications for Practice and Recommendations for Further Research were included. The purpose of the study was to examine the perceptions of church leaders from selected African American megachurches that recognize the plethora of critical issues facing aspiring and developing African American megachurches, particularly, the issue of staffing trends.

From the onset, it was assumed that the most significant issues facing aspiring and developing African-American megachurches were the broad issues of clear direction, support, and organization. That is, within the trajectory of founding and developing a megachurch, many pastors, church leadership team members, and congregations have done so completely without organizational guidance and certainly without the benefit of a blueprint, tried and true organizational guide, or substantive recommendations. Thus, as revealed, the most significant issue facing the development of AFAM megachurches in terms of staffing were the broad issues of clear direction, support and organization. Thus, the ultimate goal was to develop insights for the development of organizational models and practices to guide church leaders to more

effectively create, manage, and motivate church staffing. Thus, the ultimate goal was to develop insights for the development of organizational models and practices to guide church leaders to more effectively create, manage, and motivate church staffing.

The guiding principle and biblical inspiration for the research was anchored in the shared theological principles employed by twenty African-American megachurches: (1) demonstrated trust in the leadership, (2) demonstrated faith in the vision, and (3) demonstrated dependence in being guided by the Holy Spirit, and by the power of prayer. Thus, the principal compass and premier guidance for the current thesis, as biblical research investigation, examined the theology of staffing trends in African-American megachurches in the following areas: vision, leadership, spiritual gifts, stewardship, and evangelism.

The major component of the thesis research was developed using descriptive qualitative comparative case study analysis as the research model. The research design was strategically crafted in order to maximize efforts for in-depth analysis of the critical phenomenon of success of African-American megachurches. In order to maximize the operational experience and to best ensure that African-American megachurches are successful, the researcher was convinced that pastors, researchers, and other supporters of megachurch development must design, implement, and assess blueprints, guidelines, and organizational support for African-American megachurches. The present study represented said effort and prayerfully will provide some insight to the future positive developments of African-American mega churches.

Extended Discussion on Common Themes

As identified in Chapter Five, the current research study presented the most

compelling data which was identified as Commons Themes. Creswell offered that "data

should be analyzed through a description of the case and themes of the case as well as

through cross-case themes".[1] This data analysis process: "allows the researcher to

develop data analysis of one or more themes".[2] To that end, the data analysis process

for this qualitative case study examined the recurrent themes illuminated from the

survey, interviews, and observation which allowed the researcher to summarize the

common themes that were identified as the paramount parallel topics and mutual

issues illuminated from the participants. The isolated common themes were deemed to

be the best practices employed and best advice offered by pastors and church leaders of

the participating African-American megachurches from their perspectives and in their

own words. The consequences for adequate staffing and effective management are

critical in the sustainability of the African American megachurch. Leadership and

management skills are critical for the pastor to manage even the smallest congregation,

much less a megachurch. The ensuing extended conversation of the common themes

provided an additional perspective of examination of the scholarly literature that

directly addresses the specific issue at hand. The four isolated common themes

illuminated from the research project and the most compelling based on the

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[1] J.W. Creswell, *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches*, 3rd ed. (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publishers, 2009).

[2] Creswell, *Research Design*.

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questionnaire responses, from the interviews of selected church leaders, and through

observations of special church events and meetings were the following: (1) Celebrating

Church Volunteers, (2) Implementation of Staffing Model, (3) Development of a

Succession Plan, and (4) Cultivation of Vision and Mission. The issue of leadership,

management and staffing are key in the discussion of the four isolated themes. As

presented in the review of the literature, according to James M. Kouzes and Barry Z.

Posner, every organization, every social movement begins with a dream. The dream or

vision is the force that invents the future. In order for that future to be realized, leaders

need to develop a plan to take them and their followers from where they are to where

they want to be. Often, that plan turns out to be a series of plans or strategies that

accomplish various goals on the way to realizing the vision.[3]

Celebrating Church Volunteers

Birgitta Yeung suggests that Individual motivation is the core of the realization

and continuity in voluntary work from both the standpoint of theoretical research and

practical volunteerism in the church.[4] Churches typically have a ministry vision that is

greater than the staff is able to carry out. Floyd Flake et al recommend that celebrating

church volunteers become a priority to identify and employ the skills and talents of

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[3] John Borex, Danny Lovett, and Elmer Towns, *The Good Book on Leadership* (Nashville, TN: B & H Publishing Group, 2005), 241.

[4] Anne Birgitta Yeung, "The Octagon Model of Volunteer Motivation: Results of a Phenomenological Analysis," *Voluntas: International Journal of Voluntary and Nonprofit Organizations* 15, no. 1 (2004): 21-46.

volunteers.[5] Kouzes and Posner contend that far too often simple acts of kindness are overlooked and underappreciated by those in leadership roles. Thus, an effective leader encourages and motivates individuals and accomplishes mutual respect and recognition of accomplishments.[6]

Bill Allison offered *Six Ways to Motivate Church Volunteers*: the spiritual gift factor, the passion factor, the clarity factor, the feedback factor, the equipment factor, and the modeling factor that served as a critical framework for discussion on best volunteer practices for church.[7]

One motivational factor was the understanding and acknowledgement of the "spiritual gift factor".[8] The Bible teaches that every Christian has been given at least one spiritual gift (1 Cor. 12: 1-11). However, many believers have been given multiple spiritual gifts. Once a person has the opportunity to identify his or her spiritual gifts, there comes a responsibility to the use those gifts for the purposes that God intended. Church leaders have a responsibility to ensure that volunteers truly understand their spiritual gifts and precisely how those spiritual gifts fit into the ministry.[9] When

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[5] Floyd H. Flake, Elaine M. Flake, and Edwin C. Reed, *African-American Church Management Handbook* (Valley forge, PA: Judson Press, 2005), 16.

[6] James M. Kouzes and Barry Z. Posner, *Encouraging the Heart: A Leader's Guide to Rewarding and Recognizing Others* (Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, 1999).

[7] Bill Allison, *Recruiting, Motivating and Retaining Volunteers in the Church*. (n.p.: Cadre International, 2003).

[8] Allison, *Recruiting, Motivating and Retaining*.

[9] Allison, *Recruiting, Motivating and Retaining*.

individuals are not cultivating and transferring spiritual gifts into meaningful service, then individuals are not motivated.[10]

However, cultivation of spiritual gifts and fulfillment of purpose requires passion. For church leaders, the importance of "the passion factor" is to ensure that volunteers serve in areas in which they have a God-given passion.[11] Allison pointed out that it is possible to be passionate about something that one is not gifted to do.[12] Volunteers whose God-given spiritual giftedness does not complement his or her passion yields an extremely high maintenance volunteer. Church leaders must constantly guide and motivate volunteers keeping the passion factor in mind. Additionally, volunteers must know precisely what is desired of them to complement the church ministry.

Thus, consistent with the "the clarity factor," Allison suggested that church leaders should clearly explain how volunteers fit into the mission of the church and provide a written explanation of the mission, charge and role of volunteer at least annually.[13] The practice may prevent volunteers from becoming frustrated and lead to increased organization for both veteran and new volunteers.[14] Subsequent to church leaders providing a clear, direct charge, volunteers require regular feedback. Allison suggested that "the feedback factor" is critical as the number one motivator for

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[10]Allison, *Recruiting, Motivating and Retaining*.

[11] Allison, *Recruiting, Motivating and Retaining*.

[12] Allison, *Recruiting, Motivating and Retaining*.

[13] Allison, *Recruiting, Motivating and Retaining*.

[14] Allison, *Recruiting, Motivating and Retaining*.

individuals is constructive feedback on results.[15] Constructive, positive feedback both

praises and reprimands. However, feedback provides a desired line of communication

which is highly motivating for volunteers. In the assessment provided from feedback,

church leaders will also be able to ascertain if volunteers have been equipped with the

appropriate tools, training, and development required to maximize their volunteer

services.[16] It is unrealistic for church leaders if they have not been properly equipped.

Training and development serves as a high motivational factor for volunteers.

Paramount to equipping volunteers with the appropriate tools, training, and

development is the provision of living models.[17] It is vital that volunteers view

individuals motivated to serve God and to advance the mission of the church.

Serving as the first line of models motivated to serve God and to advance the

mission of the church, the pastor's revelations were informative and relevant regarding

the critical issue of recruitment, retention and celebration of volunteers. Undoubtedly,

understanding, developing, and implementing effective comprehensive volunteer

programs must become one of the paramount priorities of the leadership of

megachurches if they are to survive challenging staffing needs.

The reflection of the pastors completely paralleled the best practices offered in

the scholarly literature. Participating pastors pointed out that volunteers and part-time

staffers were placed in ministry positions based on their gifts and not merely because of

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[15] Allison, *Recruiting, Motivating and Retaining*.

[16] Allison, *Recruiting, Motivating and Retaining*.

[17] Allison, *Recruiting, Motivating and Retaining*.

a need to fill a vacant role or need in the church. Three pastors' best articulated the necessity of matching spiritual gifts and volunteerism. Rev. Kenneth R. Hammond, pastor of Union Baptist Church, Durham, North Carolina offered: "Staffing is dictated by vision, need, and availability."[18] Dr. Davis agreed and stated: "Part-time and volunteer staffs are placed in ministries based on their gifts and not just because a need is there."[19] Rev. Gregory Moss added: "Part-time and volunteer staffs are added according to need then trained and crossed-trained. Each person is asked to embrace the idea that all are gifted for a certain task."[20]

Participating pastors unanimously agreed that without unpaid and uncompensated volunteers, megachurches would find it difficult to exist. Rev. Isaac J. Holt, Jr., pastor of Royal Missionary Baptist Church stated: "We still use a larger volunteer-based ministry. Our trend has been ever-increasing."[21] In fact, the research findings of this present study revealed that 88% of the church's operations were conducted by unpaid volunteers (see Table 4). According to the pastors, the issue of recruitment, retention and celebration of volunteers must become one of the paramount priorities of the leadership of megachurches.

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[18] Kenneth R. Hammond, Interview with Researcher, May 8, 2014.

[19] Sam Davis, Interview with Researcher, Augusta, GA, September 11, 2013.

[20] Gregory K. Moss, Sr., Interview with Researcher, Charlotte, NC, July 11, 2013.

[21] Isaac J. Holt, Jr., Interview with Researcher, Charleston, SC, April 4, 2014.

Implementation of Staffing Model

The important roles volunteers can play in the ministry of a church ought never be dismissed or diminished. However, growing a progressive, more professional, and farther-reaching ministry will require at some point the addition of professional staff. No matter how faithful volunteers might be, they are generally people who have full-time responsibilities or jobs and serve the church on the side. Professional staff are able to contribute more consistently not only because of their training, but because, as with anyone, their vocation is high on their list of priorities. Paid staff can also be held accountable to higher standards than volunteers.[22]

There is almost always a correlation between a growing church and increased financial resources. Thus, adding staff persons should result in additional ministry and in growth, including financial growth. Churches should plan for continued growth, which justifies the hiring of additional staff.[23] A trust relationship between the pastor, other staff, and members must be developed before a change in structure can happen. Due to difficult staff relationships in our congregation's past, many of our members were suspicious of any changes suggested by their pastor or staff, and consequently, some people became very critical of both staff and changes. The changes threatened the keepers of the church's history and the people in existing positions of power.[24]

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[22] Floyd H. Flake, Elaine M. Flake, and Edwin C. Reed, *African-American Church Management Handbook* (Hoboken, NJ: Judson Press, 2005), 16.

[23] Flake, Flake, and Reed, *African-American Church Management Handbook*, 17.

[24] Beth Ann Graede, *Size Transitions in Congregations* (New York, NY: The Alban Institute, 2001), 124.

Substantial research was involved in developing the Organizational Culture

Assessment Instrument (OCAI)[25]. Professors Cameron and Quinn developed the model

of the Competing Values Framework which consists of four competing values that

correspond with four types of organizational culture.[26] Every organization has its own

combination of these four types of organizational cultures. This mix is found by the

completion of a short survey. This assessment is a valid approach to look at

organizational culture and the wish for change. Culture is unique for every organization,

including: performance, competitiveness, innovation, satisfaction, retention, and

resistance to organizational change. The African American megachurch and the issues

surrounding effective staffing are not excluded from the impact of culture challenges

during paradigm shifts.

The participating pastors clearly articulated concern over the issue of full

development and implementation of a comprehensive staffing plan was thoroughly

examined in scholarly works of Dr. Larry McSwain. Dr. McSwain is the author of *A

Critical Appraisal of the Church Growth Movement*[27] and *Swinging Pendulums: Reform,

Resistance, and Institutional Change*.[28]

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[25] Kim S. Cameron and Robert E. Quinn, *Diagnosing and Changing Organizational Culture: Based on the Competing Values Framework* (Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, 2005).

[26] Cameron and Quinn, *Diagnosing and Changing*.

[27] Larry L. McSwain, "A Critical Appraisal of the Church Growth Movement," *Review & Expositor* 77, no. 4 (1980): 521-538.

[28] Larry L. McSwain, "Swinging Pendulums: Reform, Resistance, and Institutional Change," *Southern Baptists Observed: Multiple Perspectives on a Changing Denomination* (1993): 256-75.

Dr. McSwain offered six critical points in development of a comprehensive

effective staffing plan in *How to Ensure Your Church Staff is the Right Size*.[29] He stated:

"Staffing realignment is an agenda most do not wish to face, but the facts call for fresh

thinking about congregational leadership".[30] The future of church staffing and

development will require a new emphasis on the importance of volunteerism within the

congregation. He states: "The day is past when most congregations can employ enough

people to do what is needed to accomplish their work. This is not an easy challenge

when the average frequency of attendance for most faithful church participants is less

than two Sundays per month".[31] He also recommended that church leaders focus on the

essential functions of worship, opportunities for learning, building hospitable

opportunities for enhancing relationships among participants, and connecting to the

community to attract new faces and new voices.[32] Activities, programs or events that do

not contribute vitally to these central functions are destined for extinction. He

suggested rethinking how to get done both the ministry functions and the

administrative tasks necessary for all congregations.[33] Dr. McSwain suggested that an

effective staffing plan should begin with volunteers.[34] Church units should be designed

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[29] Larry L. McSwain, "How to Ensure Your Church Staff is the Right Size," accessed September 22, 2016, http://www.ethicsdaily.com/how-to-ensure-your-church-staff-is-the-right-size-cms-21948.

[30] McSwain, "How to Ensure."

[31] McSwain, "How to Ensure."

[32] McSwain, "How to Ensure."

[33] McSwain, "How to Ensure."

[34] McSwain, "How to Ensure."

with the assumption that a group of volunteers will assist in performing major service

duties. Also, as there are a growing number of retirees who are able and willing to

function in many staffing positions, staffing plans should account for this significant

human resource.[35] As the assessment and development of staffing plans, church leaders

should consider moving the majority of employees to part-time, particular as full-time

employees retire.[36] As a guideline, a ratio of one ministerial employee for each 100 to

150 persons in average worship attendance is a best practice.[37]

Additionally, McSwain recommended increasing the administrative support for

ministerial staff to reduce or illuminate ministerial staff from administrative tasks that

could be managed by part-timers. Additional, staff planning should include the

consideration of outsourcing various tasks such as: facilities, maintenance, financial and

personnel records and others to local businesses on contract basis.[38]   Finally, McSwain

suggested that traditional use of offices be reconsidered in the current age of

technology and that staffers spend less time in offices and maximize time in the

community.[39]

Dr. Mc Swain warned that none of these suggestions can be implemented

quickly and suggested an incremental approach in the design and launch of the staffing

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[35] McSwain, "How to Ensure."

[36] McSwain, "How to Ensure."

[37] McSwain, "How to Ensure."

[38] McSwain, "How to Ensure."

[39] McSwain, "How to Ensure."

plan. The operative point was that the myriad of suggestions offer the potential of streamlining much of the work many megachurch congregations attempt to do with staff they oftentimes cannot afford.

The leadership team of the profiled Black megachurches consists of senior pastor or co-pastors surrounded by a network of paid and volunteer clergy and lay leaders responsible for day-to-day logistics. The size of the staff is correlated with church size and number and type of programs offered. Responsibilities are multifaceted because leaders tend to have both spiritual and administrative roles. And it is crucial that they espouse and can succinctly articulate the church's stance and pastor's vision. Although Back megachurches may have a large number of clergy who are members, this does not mean they are automatically tapped for leadership. Those who serve as leaders must complete a rigorous vetting process that typically includes formal education, internal church training, and recommendations from other well respected church leaders who are part of the pastor's inner circle.[40]

Recent research indicated that 1 in 7 churches in the United States spend less than 35 percent of its annual budget on staffing costs.[41] However, the results of the current study revealed that the mean percentage of the church budget allocated for staff salaries, benefits, and pastoral support was 46.44. The percentages allocated for staff employment compensation packages ranged from 33.3% to 90%. Participating

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[40] Barnes, *Black Megachurch Culture*, 87.

[41] Matt Branaugh, "Giving & Stewardship: A Closer Look at 'Lean' Church Staffs," accessed September 16, 2016http://www.christianitytoday.com/pastors/2010/april-online-only/leanstaffsurvey.html.

pastors clearly indicated that megachurches have been forced to seriously consider how

to maximize the impact of their staffing dollars. The mantle of congregational leader

carries with it a level of power and authority, which can increase as the size of the

church grow. The success of the church is in part attributed to the skill of the senior

minister.[42]

Participating pastors unanimously agreed that a comprehensive, clear, and

effective staffing model should be used. However, as an identified problematic and

serious concern, 13 churches or 65% of the participating megachurches indicated that

they operated without the benefit of a structured or formalized staffing model. Thus, 7

seven megachurches or 35% of the participating megachurches indicated that they

operated based on a Staffing Model (see Table 6). Sharing the staffing model at First

Nazareth Baptist Church in Columbia, South Carolina,

Rev. Blakely Scott explained: "The ministry of the church is staffed through church

leaders and volunteers".[43]

Several of the participating churches indicated that they were working on

developing a staffing model and implementing a staffing plan. For example, Rev. Rickie

G. Glenn, pastor of Mt. Zion Missionary Baptist Church of Cayce shared: "A staffing

contingency plan is something we are looking at as we contemplate opening up a new

campus in another geographical location".[44] Also, Dr. Charles Jackson, pastor of

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[42]Thumma and Travis, *Beyond Megachurches Myths*, 55.

[43] Blakely, Interview with Researcher.

[44] Glenn, Interview with Researcher.

Brookland Baptist, West Columbia, South Carolina stated: "While we do not use a formal staffing model/style, we periodically review certain job types to help manage and monitor performance as well as to assess efficiency, training, and staffing needs.[45] Rev. Gregory Moss, pastor of St. Paul Baptist Church in Charlotte, North Carolina acknowledged: "We are sorely under-staffed mainly because of financial restraints".[46]

Development of a Succession Plan

As Drs. Vanderbloemen and Bird offered, establishing a succession plan is critical to the organizational management of churches. Although, 50 percent of the participating churches did not implement a succession plan, those participating churches who did so demonstrated that succession planning was a critical needs-effective processes for training, replacement, and succession in order to survive and to avoid being left "like a sheep without a shepherd."[47] The pastors helped us to understand that Succession Planning and Management were paramount in the assurance for the long-term viability of an organization.

The variation of implementation styles was parallel to the scholarly literature on the topic. In *Next: Pastoral Succession That Works,* Drs. William Vanderbloemen and Warren Bird stated: "There is no singular pattern or set of rules for succession planning. But we've seen a few cardinal rules pop up. They're stunningly clear and universally

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[45] Charles Jackson, Interview with Researcher.

[46] Moss, Interview with Researcher.

[47] Numbers 27: 17.

applicable, no matter your situation".[48] In *The First Five Commandments of Succession*

Planning, Drs. Vanderbloemen and

Bird offered the five guidelines for establishing a succession plan. The board

should read and provide feedback for the succession plan from the vantage point of

future of the church.[49] Additionally, trusted friends or colleagues should read to provide

feedback.[50] A sabbatical policy should be established to provide support to pastors and

to avoid burn out. A paid three-month break every seven years is a common practice.

Both emergency and nonemergency succession plans should be established to

communicate the protocol for urgent replacement of the pastor in the event of a

serious unforeseen circumstance. The process should be written and available to

appropriate people and accessible by more than one person. Retirement succession

plans should be established with the appropriate consideration to financial

management for the church and benefits allocation to the retiring pastor.[51]

In regards to Succession Planning and Management, based on the findings, the

participating churches viewed Succession Planning as a relatively low priority for the

church (see Table 7). In fact, exactly 50% or ten of the participating churches utilized a

developed succession planning and management model. Those churches operating with

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[48] William Vanderbloemen and Warren Bird, *Next: Pastoral Succession That Works* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2014).

[49] William Vanderbloemen and Warren Bird, "The First Five Commandments of Succession Planning," accessed September 23, 2016, https://catalystconference.com/read/the-first-five-commandments-of-succession-planning/.

[50] Vanderbloemen and Bird, "First Five Commandments."

[51] Vanderbloemen and Bird, "First Five Commandments."

a succession plan indicated a variety of implementation styles. First Nazareth Baptist

Church indicated that "the church's Constitutions & By-Laws stipulate the process of

succession".[52] St Paul Baptist Church indicated that the church operates under a

rotation model.[53] Beulah Grove Missionary Baptist pointed out that "there is a

succession plan for the Pastor and the rest of the key church leaders have ministry

descriptions that outline what they should be doing in the ministry position.[54]

Cultivation of Vision and Mission

The scholarly literature admonished churches to re-evaluate their vision and

mission statements and to understand that the development and usage of the vision

and mission statement can be misguided. Dr. Tenny-Brittian states that the reason so

many churches' mission statements do not achieve the expected results is because too

often the mission statements are about what the church wants to be *doing* rather than

what it is expects to achieve. He stated:

> Too many mission statements, ...presumes that the church exists   to be a nice,
> safe, do-good-things kind of organization. But that's hardly the picture Jesus
> painted of "his church" (Matthew 16:18). *Ultimately the church does not exist to
> do good things.* That's United Way's mission. The difference between the church
> and United Way is that the church's mission is to make disciples … and *every
> good thing the church does is meant to point directly in that direction* (Matthew
> 5:16). [55]

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[52] Scott, Interview with Researcher.

[53] Moss, Interview with Researcher.

[54] Davis, Interview with Researcher.

[55] Davis, Interview with Researcher.

Dr. Tenny-Brittian pointed out that 85 percent of US churches are either declining or plateaued. Therefore, church mission and vision statements must truly and accurately reflect why the church exists.

Like many things at the megachurch, evangelism really begins with the vision and passion of the pastor. According to Thumma and Travis, they discovered that those churches which have grown to mega proportions in a short period of time are led by senior pastors who have a personal passion, desire, and call to evangelism.[56] On the issue of cultivation and development of the church's vision and mission, the research findings revealed the unanimous and paramount concern for all participating churches to have an established vision and mission. The scholarly literature paralleled the practice of all participating churches regarding the development of the vision and mission. The pervasive appreciation for the vision and mission was felt by each of the megachurches as evidenced in the presentation of the vision and/or mission statements from all participating megachurches. The vision and mission statements were designed to reflect the undergirding of the organizational value system of the megachurch.

Implications for Practice

As aforementioned in the introduction and in the review of literature, the research concluded the most significant issues facing aspiring and developing African-American megachurches was the issue of clear direction, support, and organization.

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[56] Thumma and Travis, *Beyond Megachurch Myths*, 191.

African-American megachurches have provided critical community programs through social action ministries and mission, such as food and clothing drives, prison ministries, family-oriented events, assistance with housing costs and utilities, and activities for children and youth.

The initial implications offered as recommended best practices for pastors and church leaders of existing and aspiring mega churches directly parallel the common themes presented in Chapter Five: Research Findings. As alluded to in the Research Findings and presented in the aforementioned extended conversation, the common themes and consideration for any pastor or church leadership team aspiring founding or elevating to megachurch status are as follows: (1) Celebrating Church Volunteers, (2) Implementation of Staffing Model, (3) Development of a Succession Plan and (4) Cultivation of Vision and Mission. Given the research finding, the present study confirms the critical importance of volunteerism. Very importantly, pastors and church leadership team members of existing and developing megachurches should be keenly aware of the necessity to embark on an aggressive plan to recruit, cultivate, and retain effective and dedicated volunteers. Likewise, as the research findings revealed, strategic development of the megachurch's staffing should include: a deliberate and structured Staffing Model compatible to and appropriate for the megachurch and a methodical Succession Planning and Management strategy to include recruitment, development, retention, and replacement for not only the pastor and senior officials, but for the church leadership team, staff, and volunteers.

Several of the pastors offered useful advice regarding hiring practices and policies. Overwhelmingly, pastors agreed that the most important and initial step in the staffing process should be anchored as articulated in Matthew 6:33: "But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you."[57] Still some of the participating pastors admonished the use of a wide-range of styles in hiring potential candidates based on the church's needs to include internal and external job advertisement and also recommendations and word-of-mouth staff recruitment. The following issues were the greatest issues of concern in the hiring process. First, the budget with the appropriate salary and benefits package must be identified and made available to cover the critical position. Making a hire of a candidate that accepts an under-funded position may be a bad idea and may result in subpar staff performance or eventual resentment. Also, the inability for the church to identify an appropriate funding stream for a critical position may result in low morale within the congregation and the unfavorable perception by the congregation that the church cannot afford critical staffing needs. Second, determine the appropriate recruitment strategies. Note that recruitment strategies may differ based on the staffing position. For example, for the critical position of associate pastor, some churches may wish to have only an internal candidate considered. On the other hand, some churches may desire that only the pastor, senior officials, and selected church leaders consider in making the staff appointment. Still, often, due to the familiarity of internal candidates

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[57] Matthew 6:38.

and because of historical issues with the candidates' family members within the church,

other churches may wish to conduct an external search, both nationwide and

internationally. Regardless of the advertisement strategies, pastors warned about the

complexity of vetting candidates. Some churches utilized a gifts inventory; however,

others relied on the candidate's demonstrated levels of consecration and commitment.

Pastors found identifying qualified and experienced candidates as a major problem.

However, also pastors identified the problems of merely vetting candidates based on

educational and previous employment credentials. Although many candidates possess

the requisite degree attainment and even corporate and other relevant experience,

equally important, seriously considered candidates must have people skills, must

understand and appreciate the concept of discretion, and must be able to relate to the

congregation and to other church and community constituents.

Additionally, a critical implication for practice is the need for both existing and

developing megachurches to regularly and continuously self-evaluate their services and

programs. Paramount to this point is that existing and developing megachurches should

maintain accurate records of critical data points, including but not limited to: the official

church membership, data related to full-time and part-time staff, ratio of staff to

congregation; official number of volunteers and their functions, the history of charitable

donations and gifts, and other information related to the organizational management of

the megachurch. As aspiring and developing megachurches consider expansion to

community development centers, application for federal tax-exempt status, competing

for local, state, and federal grant funding, megachurch pastors and leaders will greatly

benefit from maintaining accurate and current data for internal assessment and growth

and for external purposes as needed.   Further, and most importantly as deemed by the

research data for the current project, pastors and church leadership team members

involved in the development of the megachurch must review, approve and advance the

church's vision and mission. This prevalent sentiment of the leaders is well expressed in

Habakkuk 2: 2-3. The scripture reads: "Then the LORD answered me and said:

> Write the vision and make *it* plain on tablets, That he may run who reads it. For
> the vision *is* yet for an appointed time; But at the end it will speak, and it will not
> lie. Though it tarries, wait for it; Because it will surely come, It will not tarry.[58]

Recommendations for Further Research

This qualitative descriptive case study included twenty African-American

megachurches. Much of the existing scholarly research on African-American

megachurches investigated the African-American megachurch experience as a

movement from the historical, religious, political, and even ecclesiastical points of view.

However, the present study served as a unique, researched barometer illuminating the

experiences of twenty megachurches from the vantage point of organizational

management and operations, with an emphasis on staffing. For further study, the

researcher recommends replicating this descriptive case study analysis to include

additional megachurches and thus providing a larger sample size to increase

generalizability.

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[58] Habbakuh 2:2-3.

Additionally, the researcher recommends further study to include the recruitment, development, retention, and replacement of volunteers. In that volunteers serve as such a critical mass in the megachurch, existing and developing megachurch pastors and leaders would greatly benefit from understanding the best practicing in retaining effective volunteers.

Finally, the researcher recommends expanding qualitative inquires to involve additional megachurches, including failed or unsuccessful megachurches to determine what lessons might be learned from their failures. 2 Corinthians 12:9-10 confirms that we can learn much from failed situations. The scripture reads:

> But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness. Therefore I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me. For the sake of Christ, then, I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities. For when I am weak, then I am strong."[59]

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[59] 2 Corinthians 12:9-10.

APPENDIX A

STAFFING AND THE MEGA-CHURCH QUESTIONNAIRE

Name of Church:

Address:

Pastor: Interview Date:

1. What is the church's total membership?

2. How many staff members does the church have?

 How many employed full-time?   How   many   employed   part
 time?
 How many volunteers?

3. Do you have a succession plan for key church leaders?

4. Do you implement a particular staffing model/style?

5. Are you observing any new staffing influences or trends?

6. What is the organizational structure for the allocation (differentiation) of work for the various staff workers both full time, part time and volunteers.

7. How are the expectations and exchanges for staff members communicated in such a way to encourage open dialogue with senior staff leadership?

8. When looking at staff needs, what is the ratio of staff to the size of the congregation?

9. What are some internal struggles that result when inadequate financial resources prevent the addition of new staff?

10. How does a church of this size facilitate the alliance between paid staff and volunteers?

11. How are part time and volunteer staff members added and nurtured based on the theological foundation of churches of this size?

12. What percentage of your staff budget is dedicated for staff salaries, benefits and pastoral support?

13. What is included in staff member's compensation? Does it include housing allowance, pension, health insurance, life and disability?

14. What would you say is the single biggest challenge in hiring a key staff person? How do you begin to look for support staff?

15. What process or strategy for staff retention do you have in place?

16. What type of support and resources do Mega-Churches provide in their various communities?

17. How does a church of this size provide staffing support for community revitalization and economic development?

18. How does technological, legal and economic forces shape and influence staffing models?

19. What are some core values that all staff members are held accountable for as prerequisites for achieving the organizational goals?

20. How do churches of this size implement their theological core values in staff development and retention?

21. What symbols are displayed/exhibited in your church/mega-churches, and what do they represent?

22. What is the vision and mission that undergird their organizational value system?

23. What has been the historical pattern of staffing as compared to your present staffing pattern?

24. What is central to the culture of a Mega-Church that anchors its beliefs, values, practices and identity?

25. What impact does pastoral leadership style have on influencing the staffing philosophy of the church?

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